

ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION

Beginning with Isaiah and continuing through the Old Testament, there is a section of Scripture which is called the prophetic portion of the Bible. That does not mean that prophecy begins with Isaiah, because there are prophecies as far back as the Pentateuch, which was written by Moses. Although the predictive element bulks large in this section, the prophets were more than foretellers. They were men raised up by God in a decadent day when neither priest nor king was a worthy channel through which the expressions of God might flow.

These books of prophecy also contain history, poetry, and law, but their primary message is prophecy. Each writer, from Isaiah to Malachi, is a prophet of God. Today we make an artificial division of the prophets by designating them as the major prophets and the minor prophets. All of the prophets are in the major league as far as I am concerned -- I don't think you can put any of them back in the minors. This artificial division was determined by the length of the book, not by content. Some of the minor prophets are like atom bombs -- they may be small, but their content is potent indeed.

These prophets not only spoke of events in the distant future, but they also spoke of local events in the immediate future. They had to speak in this manner in order to qualify for the prophetic office under God according to the Mosaic code. Codes for the priest, the king, and the prophet are given in the Book of Deuteronomy. Note the code for the prophet: "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" ([Deut. 18:20-22](#)). If the local event did not transpire exactly as the prophet predicted, he was labeled a false prophet and was so treated. You may be sure that the message of the false prophet is not in the library of inspired Scripture. The prophetic books are filled with events that are local and fulfilled.

If you had lived in Isaiah's day, how would you have known that he was a true prophet? You would have judged him on his local prophecies. He not only spoke of events far in the future, like the first and second comings of Christ, but he also spoke of local things that would happen in the near future. If his local predictions had not come to pass exactly the way they were given, he would have been recognized as a false prophet and stoned.

The prophetic books are filled with local prophecies already fulfilled. All of the prophets gave local prophecies to prove that they were genuine. Remember that a sharp distinction needs to be drawn between fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy. When any prophecy was first given, it was of course unfulfilled. Since the time the prophecies were given, a great many of them have been fulfilled. One of the greatest evidences that these men were speaking the words of God is that hundreds of their prophecies have been fulfilled -- fulfilled literally.

Man cannot guess the future. Even the weatherman has difficulty in prognosticating the weather for twenty-four hours in advance, although he has the advantage of all sorts of scientific and mechanical devices to assist him. The fact of the matter is that no weatherman that you and I listen to so intently would survive as a prophet in Israel!

The law of compound probability forbids man from consistently foretelling the future. Each uncertain element which he adds decreases his chance of accuracy 50 percent. The example of hundreds of prophecies which have had literal fulfillment has a genuine appeal to the honest mind and sincere seeker after the truth. Fulfilled prophecy is one of the infallible proofs of plenary verbal inspiration of Scripture.

Let me illustrate. Suppose I make a prophecy that it is going to rain tomorrow. I would have a fifty-fifty chance of being right. It is either going to rain or it is not going to rain -- that is for sure. Now I add another element to my prophecy by predicting that it will begin raining at eleven o'clock in the morning. That reduces my chance of being right another 50 percent, but I still have a 25 percent chance of being correct. But I don't stop there. I not only say that it will start raining at eleven o'clock, but I also say that it will stop raining at three o'clock. I have reduced my chances again and have only a 12 1/2 percent chance of being right. If I keep adding uncertain elements until I have three hundred prophecies, you know they would never be literally fulfilled. No man can guess like that. Only the Holy Spirit of God could give such information. A man would not have a ghost of a chance of being right that many times, and yet God's Word has over three hundred prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ, which have been literally fulfilled.

Why did God give so many prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ to earth? There is a logical and obvious answer. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth was an important event. God did not want the children of Israel to miss Him. God marked Him out so clearly that Israel had no excuse for not recognizing Him when He was here on this earth.

Let me use a homey illustration. Suppose I am invited to your hometown. You ask me, "When you arrive at the airport, how will I know you?" I would write back and say, "I am arriving at the airport at a certain time on a certain flight. I will be wearing a pair of green-checked trousers and a blue-striped coat. I will have on a big yellow polka dot necktie and a pink shirt with a large purple flower on it. I will be wearing one brown shoe and one black shoe and white socks. On my head you will see a derby hat, and I will be holding a parrot in a cage in one hand, and with the other hand I will be leading a jaguar on a chain." When you arrive at the airport, do you think you would be able to pick me out of the crowd?

When Jesus came to earth more than nineteen hundred years ago, those who had the Old Testament and knew what it said should have been waiting at the inn in Bethlehem or waiting for the news of His birth, because they had all the information they needed. When the wise men appeared, looking for the Lord Jesus, the Israelites at least should have been interested enough to hitch a ride on the back of the camels to take a look themselves. Oh, how tremendously important His coming was, and how clearly God had predicted it!

The prophets were extremely nationalistic. They rebuked sin in high places as well as low places. They warned the nation. They pleaded with a proud people to humble themselves and return to God. Fire and tears were mingled in their message, which was not one of doom and gloom alone, for they saw the Day of the Lord and the glory to follow. All of them looked through the darkness to the dawn of a new day. In the night of sin they saw the light of a coming Savior and Sovereign; they saw the millennial Kingdom coming in all its fullness. Their message must be interpreted before an appreciation of the Kingdom in the New Testament can be attained; the correct perspective of the Kingdom must be gained through the eyes of the Old Testament prophets.

The prophets were not supermen. They were men of passions as we are, but having spoken for God, their message is still the infallible and inspired Word of God. This is substantiated by writers of the New Testament. Peter tells us: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" ([1Pet. 1:10-11](#)).

"Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" ([2Pet. 1:15-21](#)).

It was William Cowper who said, "Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet not to be wronged by a mere mortal touch."

Most of the prophets moved in an orbit of obscurity and anonymity. They did not project their personalities into the prophecy they proclaimed. Jeremiah and Hosea are the exceptions to this, which we will see when we study their books. Isaiah gives us very little history concerning himself. There are a few scant references to his life and ministry. In [Isaiah 1:1](#) he gives the times in which his life was cast: during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, all kings of Judah. In [Isaiah 6](#) he records his personal call and commission.

The days in which Isaiah prophesied were not the darkest days in Judah internally. Uzziah and Hezekiah were enlightened rulers who sought to serve God, but the days were extremely dark because of the menace of the formidable kingdom of Assyria in the north. The northern kingdom of Israel had already been carried away into captivity.

[Isaiah 36](#) -- [Isaiah 39](#) records the historical section of the ministry of Isaiah during the crisis when the Assyrian host encompassed Jerusalem. Beyond these few personal sections, Isaiah stands in the shadow as he points to Another who is coming, the One who is the Light of the world.

There are those who believe that Isaiah belonged to the royal family of David. This is supposition and certainly cannot be proven. Likewise it has been stated that he is referred to in [Hebrews 11:37](#) as the one "sawn asunder."

Whether or not this is true, the liberal critic has sawn him asunder as the writer of the book. They have fabricated the ghastly theory that there are several Isaiahs. According to this theory the book was produced by ghostwriters whom they have labeled "Deutero-Isaiah" and "Trito-Isaiah." The book will not yield to being torn apart in this manner, for the New Testament quotes from all sections of the book and gives credit to one Isaiah. The critics have cut up Isaiah like a railroad restaurant pie, but history presents only one Isaiah, not two or three.

A friend of mine, who has made quite a study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, tells me that Isaiah is the scroll the scholars work with the most. There is a great section of Isaiah intact, and only one Isaiah is presented. It is quite interesting that the Lord let a little shepherd boy reach down into a clay pot, in Qumran by the Dead Sea, and pick out a scroll that confounds the critics. The Lord will take care of the critics.

Let me illustrate how ridiculous the double or triple Isaiah hypothesis really is. Suppose a thousand years from today some archaeologists are digging in different parts of the world. One group digs in Kansas, another in Washington, D.C., and another group digs in Europe. They come up with the conclusion that there must have been three Dwight Eisenhowers. There was a General Eisenhower, the military leader of the victorious Allied forces of World War II in the European theater. There was another Eisenhower who was elected president of the United States in 1952 and 1956. There was still another Eisenhower, an invalid and victim of a heart attack and of a serious operation for ileitis. This illustration may seem ridiculous to some people, but that is exactly how I feel when I hear the critics talk about three Isaiahs. Of course there was only one man by the name of Dwight Eisenhower who fulfilled all the requirements without any absurdity. The same is true of Isaiah.

The prophecy of Isaiah is strikingly similar to the organization of the entire Bible. This similarity can be seen in the following comparison:

BIBLE ISAIAH

66 Books 66 Chapters

39 Books -- Old Testament 39 Chapters -- Law, Government of God

27 Books -- New Testament 27 Chapters -- Grace, Salvation of God

There are sixty-six direct quotations from Isaiah in the New Testament. (Some have found eighty-five quotations and allusions to Isaiah in the New Testament.) Twenty of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament have direct quotations. Isaiah is woven

into the New Testament as a brightly colored thread is woven into a beautiful pattern. Isaiah is discernible and conspicuous in the New Testament. Isaiah is chiseled into the rock of the New Testament with the power tool of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah is often used to enforce and enlarge upon the New Testament passages that speak of Christ.

The historic interlude (chs. 36 -- 39) leaves the high plateau of prophecy and drops down to the record of history. Even the form of language is different. It is couched in the form of prose rather than poetry.

The third and last major division (chs. 40 -- 66) returns to the poetic form but is in contrast to the first major section. In the first we had judgment and the righteous government of God; in the last we have the grace of God, the suffering, and the glory to follow. Here all is grace and glory. The opening "Comfort ye" sets the mood and tempo.

It is this section that has caused the liberal critics to postulate the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis. A change of subject matter does not necessitate a change of authorship. It is interesting that for nineteen hundred years there was not a word about a second Isaiah. John refers to this section as authored by Isaiah (see [John 1:23](#)). Our Lord likewise referred to this section as written by Isaiah (see [Luke 4:17-21](#)). Philip used a chapter from this section to win an Ethiopian to Christ (see [Acts 8](#)). There are numerous other references which confirm the authorship of Isaiah.

Isaiah prophesied many local events. When Jerusalem was surrounded by the Assyrian army, Isaiah made a very daring prophecy: "Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it" ([Isa. 37:33](#)). Also see Isaiah's prophecy concerning the sickness of Hezekiah in [Isaiah 38](#).

There are other prophecies which were not fulfilled in his lifetime, but today they stand fulfilled. See, for instance, his prophecies concerning the city of Babylon: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged" ([Isa. 13:19-22](#)).

Further fulfillments relative to Babylon are recorded in [Isaiah 47](#). Excavations at Babylon have revealed the accuracy of these prophecies. More than fifty miles of the walls of Babylon have been excavated. The culture of this great civilization is still impressive but lies in dust and debris today according to the written word of Isaiah. This is one of many examples that could be given. Others will come before us in this study as we proceed through the book.

The New Testament presents the Lord Jesus Christ as its theme, and by the same token Isaiah presents the Lord Jesus Christ as his theme. Isaiah has been called the fifth evangelist, and the Book of Isaiah has been called the fifth gospel. Christ's virgin birth,

His character, His life, His death, His resurrection, and His second coming are all presented in Isaiah clearly and definitively.

Outline

I. Judgment (Poetry), [Isa. 1](#) through [Isa. 35](#)

Revelation of the sovereign on the throne

- A. Solemn Call to the Universe to Come into the Courtroom to Hear God's Charge against the Nation Israel, [Isa. 1](#)
- B. Preview of the Future of Judah and Jerusalem, [Isa. 2](#)
- C. Present View of Judah and Jerusalem, [Isa. 3](#)
- D. Another Preview of the Future, [Isa. 4](#)
- E. Parable of the Vineyard and Woes Predicated for Israel, [Isa. 5](#)
- F. Isaiah's Personal Call and Commission as Prophet, [Isa. 6](#)
- G. Prediction of Local and Far Events, [Isa. 7](#) through [Isa. 10](#)
(Hope of future in coming child)
- H. Millennial Kingdom, [Isa. 11](#) through [Isa. 12](#)
- I. Burdens of Surrounding Nations (Largely Fulfilled), [Isa. 13](#) through [Isa. 23](#)
 - 1. Burden of Babylon, [Isa. 13](#) through [Isa. 14](#)
 - 2. Burden of Moab, [Isa. 15](#) through [Isa. 16](#)
 - 3. Burden of Damascus, [Isa. 17](#)
 - 4. Burden of the Land beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia, [Isa. 18](#)
 - 5. Burden of Egypt, [Isa. 19](#) through [Isa. 20](#)
 - 6. Burden of Babylon, Edom, Arabia, [Isa. 21](#)
 - 7. Burden of the Valley of Vision, [Isa. 22](#)
 - 8. Burden of Tyre, [Isa. 23](#)
- J. Kingdom, Process, and Program by Which the Throne Is Established on Earth, [Isa. 24](#) through [Isa. 34](#)
- K. Kingdom, Mundane Blessings of the Millennium, [Isa. 35](#)

II. Historic Interlude (Prose), [Isa. 36](#) through [Isa. 39](#)

(This section is probably a prophetic picture of how God will deliver His people in the Great Tribulation, see [2Kings 18](#) through [2Kings 19](#); [2Chron. 29](#) through [2Chron. 30](#).)

- A. King Hezekiah and the Invasion of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, [Isa. 36](#)
- B. King Hezekiah's Prayer and the Destruction of the Assyrian Hosts, [Isa. 37](#)
- C. King Hezekiah's Sickness, Prayer, and Healing, [Isa. 38](#)
- D. King Hezekiah Plays the Fool, [Isa. 39](#)

III. Salvation (Poetry), [Isa. 40](#) through [Isa. 66](#)

Revelation of the Savior in the Place of Suffering (There is a threefold division marked by the concluding thought in each division, "There is no peace to the wicked.")

- A. Comfort of Jehovah Which Comes through the Servant, [Isa. 40](#) through [Isa. 48](#)
(Polemic against idolatry -- Help and hope come only through the Servant)
- B. Salvation of Jehovah Which Comes through the Suffering Servant, [Isa. 49](#) through [Isa. 57](#)

1. Redeemer of the Whole World, Who Is God's Servant, [Isa. 49](#) through [Isa. 52:12](#)
2. Redemption Wrought by the Suffering Servant, Who Is God's Sheep (Lamb), [Isa. 52:13](#) through [Isa. 53:12](#)
3. Results of the Redemption Wrought by the Redeemer, Who Is God's Only Savior, [Isa. 54](#) through [Isa. 57](#)

C. Glory of Jehovah Which Comes through the Suffering Servant, [Isa. 58](#) through [Isa. 66](#)

1. Sin Hinders the Manifestation of the Glory of God, [Isa. 58](#) through [Isa. 59](#)
2. Redeemer Is Coming to Zion, [Isa. 60](#) through [Isa. 66](#)
(Nothing can hinder God's progress -- He will judge sin)

Chapter 1

THEME: God's charge against the nation Israel

Chapter 1 is God's solemn call to the universe to come into the courtroom to hear God's charge against the nation Israel.

Isaiah lived in a time of tension. In many respects it was a time of crisis in the history of the world. World-shaking events were transpiring. Catastrophic and cataclysmic judgments were taking place. There was upheaval in the social order.

A new nation had arisen in the north; it was moving toward world domination. Assyria, the most brutal nation ever to put an army on the battlefield, was marching to world conquest. Already the northern kingdom of Israel had been taken into Assyrian captivity. The southern kingdom of Judah was in a precarious position, and an Assyrian army, 185,000 strong, was just outside the walls of Jerusalem.

In this dire, desperate, and difficult day Hezekiah entered the temple and turned to God in prayer. God sent His prophet with an encouraging word. He asserted that Assyria would never take Judah, the army of Assyria would never set foot in the streets of Jerusalem, and they would never cross the threshold of any gate of the city of the great King. But God was preparing another nation, Babylon, the head of gold down by the banks of the River Euphrates; this nation would eventually take Judah into captivity unless she turned to God.

God was giving Judah another chance. In order to establish the justice of His cause, God called her into court; He held her before His bar of justice. He gave her opportunity to answer the charge, to hear His verdict, and to throw herself on the mercy of His court. God invites us into the court to see if He is just. It is well for this day and generation to go into the courtroom and see God on the throne of judgment in this sensational scene.

In the thinking of the world, God has been removed from the throne of judgment. He has been divested of His authority, robbed of His regal prerogative, shorn of His locks as the moral ruler of His universe; He has been towed to the edge of the world and pushed over

as excess baggage. This is a blasphemous picture of God! He is still the moral ruler of His universe. He is still upon the throne of justice; He has not abdicated. He punishes sin.

Isaiah records the principles upon which God judges the nations. God raises up nations, and He puts them down. The kingdoms of this world today are Satan's, but God overrules them. God has permitted great nations to rise, and He has permitted Satan to use them; but when it is time in God's program for certain nations to move off the stage, He moves them off -- Satan notwithstanding. Even God's own people, the Jews, are a testimony of the fact that He rules in the affairs of the nations of this world.

There is an expression that keeps recurring in my thinking from the Song of Moses which the children of Israel sang as they crossed the Red Sea. The expression is, "Jehovah is a man of war." Yes, He is! And He will not compromise with sin. He will not accept the white flag of surrender. He is moving forward in undeviating, unhesitating, and uncompromising fury against it. There would be hope today for man if he could say with Isaiah, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne" ([Isa. 6:1](#)).

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah [[Isa. 1:1](#)].

First of all, note that this is a vision "concerning Judah and Jerusalem." I am sure that we will not make the mistake of locating either one anywhere in the Western Hemisphere. There is, however, a marvelous application for America today -- one that we need to hear and heed.

"In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah." Uzziah, the tenth king of Judah, became a leper because he intruded into the holy place, which even a king was not permitted to do. However, Uzziah is classed as a good king. Jotham, his son who followed him, was also a good king. But Ahaz, the grandson of Uzziah, was a bad king. Finally, Hezekiah, the last king mentioned, was a good king. He was the king who asked that his life be prolonged, and God granted his desire. Asking this was probably a mistake on Hezekiah's part, because many bad things took place during his last years that actually were the undoing of the kingdom.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me [[Isa. 1:2](#)].

God begins this prophecy in a majestic manner. This is God's general judgment against Judah. He is calling the world, if you please, to come into the courtroom and listen to the proceedings as He tries His people. God does not do anything in a corner or in the dark. This language is strangely similar to the way [Deuteronomy 32](#) begins: "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." When God put the nation Israel in the land, having taken them out of the land of Egypt, He put down the conditions on which He was "homesteading" them in the Promised Land. He called the created intelligences of heaven and earth to witness these conditions.

Now, after five hundred years, God says, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." He is ready to take them out of the land and send them

into Babylonian captivity. He calls the created intelligences of heaven and earth to witness that He is just and right in His dealings. His charge against them is rebellion. The condition upon which they were allowed to dwell in the land was obedience. They were disobedient; and, according to the Mosaic Law, when a man had a rebellious son, that son was to be stoned to death. God's charge against them is a serious one. As His children, they had rebelled against the Mosaic Law in this connection. In the Book of Deuteronomy note the law concerning an incorrigible son: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear" ([Deut. 21:18-21](#)).

This was what the Law did with a prodigal son. The crowd that heard Christ tell of the Prodigal Son was dumbfounded when He said that the father told the servant to kill the fatted calf instead of killing the son! When the Prodigal Son got home, he asked his father for forgiveness, and even before he finished his confession, his father had thrown his arms around the boy, kissed him, and forgiven him. Instead of stripes, the son was given a wonderful feast. God is not only just, but also merciful; but the rebellion of a son is a serious thing. Scripture has a great deal to say about it.

In order to emphasize His charge and break the tension of the courtroom, God indulges in a bit of humor. I trust that you recognize humor in the Bible -- it will make you enjoy it a great deal more. I think that when we get into eternity and get past the time of sin on earth and are finished with the program God is working out at this present time, we are going to have a good time. I think we are going to have many laughs and enjoy many hilarious situations. It does not hurt Christians to have the right kind of humor. God has put a lot of humor in the Bible. A lady, who was a member of a church I pastored, was upset every time I found humor in the Bible. She would make a trip down the aisle and tell me that I was being irreverent. She has been home with the Lord for a long time, and I do hope she has had a couple of good laughs, because she certainly never had them down here. The fact of the matter is, she acted like she had been weaned on a dill pickle. Unfortunately, she never found humor in this life, and she didn't seem to enjoy the Christian life as God has intended us to enjoy it.

[The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider \[\[Isa. 1:3\]\(#\)\].](#)

This verse is a splendid piece of satire. The two animals that are used for illustrations do not have a reputation for being very intelligent. Neither the ox nor the long-eared donkey has a very high I.Q. The expression "dumb as an ox" is still often used. The donkey does not wear a Phi Beta Kappa key. I should qualify that statement: I admit that I have met a few who do! However, even these animals have intelligence enough to know who feeds them.

When I was a pastor in Texas, there was a grassy vacant lot across the street from the church to which a very poor man with many patches on his overalls would bring his little

donkey. While the donkey was grazing, many of the little boys and girls in the neighborhood would ride him, and even the preacher rode him once in a while. When I would get on his back, he wouldn't pay any attention to me -- or to anyone else. Late in the afternoon the donkey's owner would come for him. When he came tottering along, the donkey would prick up his long ears. He knew his owner. He knew who was going to feed him that night.

On the contrary, a number of folk today do not have intelligence enough to know that God provides for all their needs. They don't know that God feeds them. They do not even recognize that He exists. What a commentary on this sophisticated generation that no longer needs God. The story is told of a little boy, reared in a Christian home, who was having his first visit away from home. Although he was only going next door for the evening meal, he was eagerly anticipating the experience, and at five o'clock he was dressed and ready to go. When it came time for all of them to sit down at the table, the little fellow, who was accustomed to hearing the giving of thanks at the table, bowed his head and shut his eyes. But the home to which he had been invited was not a Christian home, and they immediately began to pass the food. Because he didn't want to miss anything, he opened his eyes and looked around. The little fellow was just a bit embarrassed, but not having any inhibitions, he raised the question: "Don't you folks thank God for your food?" Then the host was a bit embarrassed but confessed that they did not. The young lad was thoughtful for a moment and then blurted out, "You're exactly like my dog: you just start in." There are many people like that today. Multitudes of people live just like animals.

God said, "The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master's crib, but my people do not know." We hear today that man has descended from animals. Who says he has? Man acts like animals act; in fact, it could be said that some animals are smarter than some men. Instead of man descending from animals, maybe animals descended from men; maybe they have evolved into something better than man. Man has dropped pretty low. I think what the Lord said, when He opened up court, reveals that.

He continues His charge in [verse 4](#):

Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward [[Isa. 1:4](#)].

We see God as the Judge of all the earth and of His own people Israel. It seems a strange thing to think of God as a judge, because in the thinking of the world today God has been removed from the throne of judgment. He has been divested of His authority. He has been robbed of His regal prerogatives and shorn of His locks as moral ruler of the universe. He has been driven to the edge of the world and pushed over as excess baggage. Don't think I am being irreverent when I say that modern teaching has given us a warped conception of God. He is characterized as a toothless old man with long whiskers, sitting on the edge of a fleecy cloud with a rainbow around His shoulders. He is simple, senile, and sentimental. He is overwhelmed with mushy love that slops over on every side, dripping honey and tears. He does not have enough courage or backbone to swat a fly or crush a grape. His proper place is in the corner by the fireplace where He can either

crochet or knit. This is the world's conception of God, but that is not how the Bible describes Him. God is going to judge this universe just as He judged His own people. That ought to be a warning not only to nations but also to individuals.

Israel is described as "a people laden with iniquity." This phrase throws a world of light upon the personal invitation that the Lord Jesus gave in the New Testament. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ([Matt. 11:28](#)). Now we know what He meant -- "laden with iniquity." The people of Israel were laden with sin. Today His invitation goes out to those who are laden with sin to bring that burden and load to Him and find rest, the rest of redemption.

In this verse God spells out Israel's condition. They are backslidden, they have turned away from God, and they are a people laden with iniquity. Now He is going to spell out in detail the charge that He has made against them.

This brings to mind the philosophy of human government upon which God operates. This system is presented to us in the Book of Judges, and you see this cycle of the history of human government working itself out in the nation. In the Book of Judges we saw Israel serving God, being blessed of God, and prospering. They began, in their prosperity, to turn away from God, and they finally turned to idolatry. They were in rebellion against God; in fact, they forgot Him. Then God delivered them into the hands of the enemy. In a short time they began to cry out to God for deliverance. When they turned to God, He delivered them from their enemies and put them back in the place of blessing. This picture follows all the way through Scripture, and history corroborates the fact that there are three steps in the downfall of any nation. There is religious apostasy, then moral awfulness, and finally political anarchy. Many people don't pay any attention to the cycle until the stage of political anarchy is reached, and then they cry out that the government should be changed and a new system adopted. Well, the problem is not in the government. The problem in Jerusalem was not in the palace, but the problem was within the temple. The trouble begins when there is spiritual apostasy.

Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers [[Isa. 1:5-7](#)].

What God says in these verses is absolutely true. There is moral awfulness and political anarchy, but God is holding back. This still is not the charge that He is bringing against them.

And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah [[Isa. 1:8-9](#)].

In other words, if there had not been a faithful remnant, God would have destroyed Israel as He did Sodom and Gomorrah. But there has always been a remnant of God's people. There is a remnant today: there are Christians scattered throughout the world.

Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah [[Isa. 1:10](#)].

Now God is spelling it out. The whole problem is spiritual apostasy.

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats [[Isa. 1:11](#)].

God specifies His charges against His people. He has put His hand upon a definite thing, and He is going to prove that particular point in which they are wrong. He puts His finger on the best thing in Judah, not the worst. He shows them what is exceedingly wrong. Israel has a God-given religion and a God-appointed ritual in a God-constructed temple, but they are wrong in that which represented the best. They are bringing sacrifices and going through the ritual according to the letter of the Law, but their hearts are in rebellion against God. Their religion is not affecting their conduct. Frankly, that is a problem among believers today. A great many of us have reached the place where we have a form of godliness, but we deny the power thereof.

When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting [[Isa. 1:12-13](#)].

Even doing that which God has commanded becomes wrong when the heart is not in it and when it does not affect the believer's conduct.

If the Lord Jesus were to come into your church next Sunday, would He commend you? Would He compliment you for your faithfulness to Him? Would He tell you how much He appreciates your attendance at the services and your giving to Him? I think not! The One who has "feet as burnished brass," whose "eyes are as a flame of fire," and from whose mouth there goes "a sharp two-edged sword," would not commend us (cf. [Prov. 5:4](#); [Dan. 10:6](#); [Rev. 1:14-16](#)). I think He would tell most of us that all of our outward form, all of our lovely testimonies and loud professions, are making Him sick. Would he not tell us that we need to repent and come in humility to Him? Surely this is a warning to the churches of America. Fundamentally, our difficulty today is spiritual; and, until the professing church repents and has genuine revival, there is no hope for America.

And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow [[Isa. 1:15-17](#)].

God says, "You are nothing in the world but a bunch of phonies. You come into My presence as if you are really genuine. You go through the sacrifices, but they have become absolutely meaningless to you." God has spelled out His charge against them. They are guilty of apostasy. It has led to moral awfulness and to political anarchy in the nation. God has called Israel into court and has proved His charge against them. Israel is like a prisoner standing at the bar waiting for the sentence of judgment. God can now move in to judge them.

But even at this late date God is willing to settle the case out of court. He says to Israel, "Don't go into court with Me, because you are going to lose." The Judge has something else to say, and we stand amazed and aghast at what He says next:

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool [[Isa. 1:18](#)].

God is saying to Judah, "Do not force Me to render sentence. Settle your case out of court." In [Matthew 5:25](#) the Lord Jesus said, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him . . ." -- don't wait until he takes you to court. God says that He has a secret formula, a divine alchemy, a potent prescription, a powerful potion, a heavenly elixir that will take out sin. It is not a secret formula like the newest bomb, but it is more potent. You will find it in [Isaiah 53](#) as the One who was more marred, who suffered more, who died differently, who was wounded for our transgressions. Because He paid the penalty, the Judge is able now to extend mercy to us. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, keeps on cleansing from all sin.

This is God's charge against His people, and this is the basis on which they may turn to Him. If they will turn to Him, He will preserve the nation -- He will give them almost one hundred years -- then if they don't turn to Him and change their ways, He will send them into captivity.

We see an application of this to our own country. In my beloved country I see political anarchy. It is obvious to most of us that men cannot solve the problems of this nation, and certainly not of the world.

The historian, Gibbon, gives five reasons for the decline of the Roman Empire in his book, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. As the first step towards decline, he lists the undermining of the dignity and the sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society. The second step includes higher and higher taxes and the spending of public money for free bread and circuses for the populace. The third was the mad craze for pleasure and sports becoming every year more exciting, more brutal, and more immoral. The fourth step was the building of great armaments when the real enemy was within: the decay of individual responsibility. The fifth was the decay of religion, fading into mere form, losing touch with life, and losing power to guide the people.

You see, a nation's decline begins with spiritual apostasy, which is followed by moral awfulness, and results in political anarchy.

Is there spiritual apostasy in this land of ours? Every informed Christian is aware that modernism has taken over most of the great denominations of America today; and, in this dire day, modernism, by its own confession, has failed. Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, one of the mouthpieces of liberalism, is quoted as saying that liberal Protestantism has been inclined to sacrifice every characteristic Christian insight if only it could thereby prove itself intellectually respectable, but that liberalism finds itself unable to cope with the tragic experiences of our day.

I find in my file an interesting article clipped from the Wall Street Journal several years ago: "What America needs more than railway extension, western irrigation, a low tariff, a bigger cotton crop, and a larger wheat crop is a revival of religion. The kind that father and mother used to have. A religion that counted it good business to take time for family worship each morning right in the middle of wheat harvest. A religion that prompted them to quit work a half hour earlier on Wednesday so that the whole family could get ready to go to prayer meeting." America's problem is the same today; it is a spiritual problem.

Dr. Albert Hyma, when he was professor of history at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, said, "The United States of America in the past fifty years has been dominated to a large extent by persons who do not understand the spiritual heritage bequeathed by their own ancestors." Dr. J. Gresham Machen said, "America is coasting downhill on a godly ancestry, and God pity America when we hit the bottom of the hill." Friend, we have hit the bottom of the hill, but God is saying to us, "Come, let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." There is a way out for America, but, if we go the same direction as other nations, our time is limited.

Aaron Burr was a grandson of the great Jonathan Edwards who, upon an occasion, conducted meetings at Princeton, where Aaron Burr was a student. There was a great spiritual movement in the school. One night Jonathan Edwards preached on the subject, "The Mastery of Jesus." Aaron Burr was deeply stirred, and he went to the room of one of his professors to talk to him about making a decision for Jesus. The professor urged him not to make a decision under any sort of an emotional appeal, but to wait until after the meetings were over. Aaron Burr postponed making a decision and went on to murder a great American and to betray his country. When he was an old man, a young man came to him and said, "Mr. Burr, I want you to meet a Friend of mine." Aaron Burr said, "Who is he?" The young man replied, "He is Jesus Christ, the Savior of my soul." A cold sweat broke out on the forehead of Aaron Burr, and he replied, "Sixty years ago I told God if He would let me alone, I would let Him alone, and He has kept His word!"

There is a way out for America, and there is a way out for you and for me. Someone has stated it this way:

Philosophy says: Think your way out.
Indulgence says: Drink your way out.
Politics says: Spend your way out.
Science says: Invent your way out.
Industry says: Work your way out.

Communism says: Strike your way out.
Fascism says: Bluff your way out.
Militarism says: Fight your way out.
The Bible says: Pray your way out, but
Jesus Christ says: "I am the way (out) . . ."

After the Lord brings His charges against Judah and offers them salvation and a way out of their trouble, He continues gently with a warning.

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it [[Isa. 1:19-20](#)].

The government of God and the grace of God are two aspects emphasized in the Book of Isaiah. During the remainder of chapter 1 God is attempting to move Judah back to Himself. He is giving the people a warning.

Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:

And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:

And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city [[Isa. 1:24-26](#)].

Judah's destiny depends upon the people's response to God's offer of forgiving grace. If they are willing to turn from their sin and obey God, He will bestow His favor upon them materially and spiritually and protect them from their enemies.

Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen [[Isa. 1:27-29](#)].

This has to do with idolatry because the idols were placed under the oak trees, and a garden was planted around them.

For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.

And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them [[Isa. 1:30-31](#)].

God has been misrepresented in the sense that He has been pictured as losing His temper and breaking forth in judgment. That is never a true picture of God. The fact is that our sin is like a wick, and when we play with the spark of sin, the fire will follow. "Be not

deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" ([Gal. 6:7](#)).

Chapter 2

THEME: Prophecy concerning the last days: the Kingdom and the Great Tribulation

Isaiah chapters 2 through 5 constitute one complete prophecy. These chapters look beyond the present time to the last days concerning Israel (the total nation of twelve tribes). As we move through these chapters, God makes it clear that He is speaking of all the tribes of Israel which will be brought back together. God always thinks of Israel as one nation.

The last days of Israel need to be distinguished from the last days of the church. God is not talking about the church in these chapters. There is no way of making what He says applicable to the church. We can be sure of this fact, because in the New Testament Paul says that the church was a mystery which was not revealed in the Old Testament at all. In writing to the Romans, Paul makes this very clear: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" ([Rom. 16:25](#)). Now if Isaiah had known about the church, it would not have been a new revelation in Paul's day. From Paul's day to the present time the church has been God's agency through which He is giving His message to the world.

However, the church will be removed from the world at the time of the Rapture. Isaiah's message looks beyond the time of the church to the day when God will begin to move in a new way. We call it the Great Tribulation period, at the close of which He will set up His Kingdom.

Preview Of The Future For Judah And Jerusalem (2:1-22)

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem [[Isa. 2:1](#)].

When Isaiah speaks of Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem, he means exactly these people and places. Judah means Judah, Israel means Israel, and Jerusalem means Jerusalem. If Isaiah uses figures of speech, he will make it perfectly clear that they are figures of speech. The prophet will let you know when he is making a different application. Beware of the fallacy of spiritualizing prophecy in conformity to some outmoded theological cliché which fits into some church's program.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it [[Isa. 2:2](#)].

"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains." Again let me say that this is not speaking of the last days of the church. The last days of the church pertain to the time of spiritual apostasy. Paul makes this clear in his pastoral epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy: "Now the

Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith . . ." ([1Tim. 4:1](#)). You can see that the "latter times" of the church and the "last days" of Israel are not identical, nor are they contemporary, although there is some overlapping. Certainly they do not refer to the same period of time. It is important to note this. The "last days" in this verse refer to the Great Tribulation period. The Lord Jesus Christ made it clear, when His disciples asked Him, "When shall these things be?" ([Luke 21:7](#) refers to the destruction of Jerusalem) that by the "last days" He meant the Great Tribulation period. The Great Tribulation ends with the coming of Christ to earth and the setting up of His Kingdom. The first section of Isaiah, chapters 2 -- 5, deals with the Great Tribulation period and the Kingdom that shall be set up on this earth.

"The mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains." This pertains to the nation of Israel after the church has been removed. The word mountain in Scripture means "a kingdom, an authority, or a rule." Daniel makes this clear in his prophecy. "The LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains" -- that is, above all the kingdoms of this earth. The kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will be King of kings and Lord of lords. One of the reasons that today Israel is such a hot spot and such a sensitive piece of real estate is because it is the very spot that God has chosen to be the political and religious center of the world during the Kingdom Age. Speaking of those days Daniel says, "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" ([Dan. 2:35](#)). God's Kingdom will be exalted above the kingdoms of this world.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain [the kingdom] of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem [[Isa. 2:3](#)].

Both government and religion will center in Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus Christ will sit upon the throne of David. One of the primary concerns of those who inhabit the earth will be to discover and do the will of God. They will seek to learn His ways and walk in His paths.

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more [[Isa. 2:4](#)].

"He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people." The period of the reign of Christ on the earth during the Millennium is another trial period for mankind. And there will be a great many judged during that period; and, of course, multitudes will be saved during that time also.

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks" -- the rule of the Lord upon earth at this time will be righteous, and He will compel the nations to practice justice and fairness with each other. For the first time all countries will dwell

together in peace. Only during the Kingdom Age will the people be able to beat their swords into plowshares. [Joel 3:10](#) tells us that during the Tribulation just the opposite will be true: the people will beat their plowshares into swords. In fact, we are living in times like that right now. The idea of disarming nations and disarming individuals is, in my judgment, contrary to the Word of God. In the New Testament the Lord Jesus said, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace . . ." ([Luke 11:21](#)). If you are going to have peace and safety, you must have law and order. The prophecy of beating swords into plowshares will be fulfilled during the Millennium, when the Lord Jesus is reigning. Then you will be able to take the locks off of your doors, and you will be able to walk the streets at night in safety. You will not be drafted, because there will be no more war. There will be no more need for weapons for defense. The Kingdom that the Lord is going to establish upon earth will be one of peace. He is the Prince of Peace.

It is futile, nonsensical, and asinine for any man or nation to promise to bring peace upon the earth today. The United Nations, which was founded to help bring peace on earth, is one of the greatest places to carry on battles. It has proven how impotent it is. It cannot bring peace on earth. It has only increased dictatorship on the earth. We do not have peace in the world. If you are a child of God with your thinking cap on and begin to think God's thoughts after Him, you will find that you are living in a big, bad, evil world. If you expect to see a brotherhood of all men, you are doomed to disappointment, because man is not capable of bringing peace to this earth. There will be no peace as long as there is sin in the hearts of men and an overweening ambition to rule over other people.

O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD
[\[Isa. 2:5\]](#).

In view of the future that is coming, certainly we should walk in the light of the Lord. This is the only way of peace. When you leave God out, you will never have peace.

Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob,
because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers
like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of
strangers.

Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of
their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any
end of their chariots:

Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own
hands, that which their own fingers have made:

And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth
himself: therefore forgive them not [\[Isa. 2:6-9\]](#).

Judah adopted new ideas from the heathen and incorporated them into their own religion. They embraced all kinds of ways from Assyria and Babylon. Before long they had joined the rest of the nations in worshiping the creature more than the Creator.

Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD,
and for the glory of his majesty.

The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low [[Isa. 2:10-12](#)].

God intends to break down the proud man -- the man who thinks he can rule himself and the man who thinks he can rule the world without God.

And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan [[Isa. 2:13](#)].

The cedars of Lebanon and the oaks of Bashan represent, I believe, the pride of man.

And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up [[Isa. 2:14](#)].

This has reference to government and society.

And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall [[Isa. 2:15](#)].

This is a reference to the military, which will be judged.

And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures [[Isa. 2:16](#)].

Commerce and art are going to be judged.

And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day [[Isa. 2:17](#)].

God is going to put down all of the pride and pomp of men.

And the idols he shall utterly abolish [[Isa. 2:18](#)].

God is going to get rid of all false religion.

And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for the fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth [[Isa. 2:19](#)].

The Book of Revelation repeats what man will do in that day of judgment: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" ([Rev. 6:15-16](#)).

All you see on television today has to do with the political economy, government, commerce, art, the pomp and pride of man -- and the religion of man. The day is coming when all of man's pride is going to be brought low, and the Lord Jesus Christ will be

exalted on earth. Today He is not being given His proper place in government, in society, in business, in art, or in the pomp and ceremony of the world -- or even in the religion of the world. He is left out today. When He comes again, men are going to run for the caves of the earth. I don't know whether men were ever cavemen or not, but a day is coming in the future when men are going back to the caves.

In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold,
which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and
to the bats;

To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged
rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when
he ariseth to shake terribly the earth [[Isa. 2:20-21](#)].

"When he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" is the time of the Great Tribulation.

Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is
he to be accounted of? [[Isa. 2:22](#)].

Don't put your confidence in man. You and I exhale, but we don't know whether we are going to inhale the next breath. That is the frailty of man -- if he misses one breath he is out of the picture. Multitudes today going about their daily business will have fatal heart attacks and disappear from the earth's scene. Don't put your confidence in man. Put your confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ today.

Chapter 3

THEME: The cause of Israel's undoing: weak government; loose and low morals

This is a continuation of the prophecy begun in chapter 2 (chs. 2 -- 5 constitute a complete prophecy). In this section on judgment, chapter 3 reveals God's judgment leveled particularly against the nation of Israel. Although it has application to other nations, the interpretation is definitely to Israel. Further along in this judgment section we will see God's judgment of surrounding nations, which are among the most remarkable prophecies in the Word of God, and many of them have been literally fulfilled. However, we find that God's judgment against Israel is more severe and intense than against any other nation. Why? Well, Israel was the nation God had chosen in a peculiar way, and it enjoyed a particularly close relationship to God. Privilege creates responsibility.

Because privilege always creates responsibility, I believe God will judge the United States more severely than He will judge any of our contemporary nations -- like China, for example. The United States has been privileged to know the Word of God as no other nation has -- except Israel.

Israel as a nation had more light than any of its neighbors, and light rejected brings severe punishment, as will be illustrated in this book.

The subject of God's judgment may be offensive to you, but please don't hide your head in the sand like the proverbial ostrich. Let's face reality whether we like it or not. God does judge sin. Not only will He judge sin in the future, He has judged it in the past. And He makes no apology for it.

The prophecy before us is a picture of Isaiah's day, and it has been fulfilled. However, its fulfillment does not exhaust its meaning, because the conditions described will prevail again at the end times and will bring down the wrath of God in judgment -- not only upon Israel but also upon the nations of the world.

The first fifteen verses deal with the subject of weak government and women's dress. These seem to be totally unrelated subjects, but we shall see that they are not as far removed as they appear to be. Weak government is caused by a lack of leadership, as evidenced by women rulers -- and we will see what Isaiah means by this.

Weak Government (3:1-14)

For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from
Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of
bread, and the whole stay of water [[Isa. 3:1](#)].

This verse confines us to Jerusalem and Judah.

Although man does not live by bread alone, he surely needs it. This famine is a judgment of God. There are thirteen famines mentioned in the Word of God, and every one of them is a judgment from Him upon the nation of Israel.

The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet,
and the prudent, and the ancient,

The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor,
and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator [[Isa. 3:2-3](#)].

God is going to remove not only bread and water but all the men of leadership. Qualified men for high positions are lacking, and this is a judgment from God.

This can be brought up to date. Have you been impressed by the fact that there are no great men on the contemporary scene? There are quite a few men who are passing themselves off as great, but they would have been pygmies in the days of Washington, Lincoln, Jackson, Teddy Roosevelt, or the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence. I am not taking sides with any political party when I say this, but today there are many ambitious men, young and old alike, who have practically no qualifications as statesmen. One hundred years ago they would have been called cheap politicians, but today they are called statesmen!

We have men of war, but we have no great generals. Our army would not be in the situation it is in today if it had strong leadership. There is lack of leadership in our judicial system. We have an alarming crime wave because we have pygmies sitting in the seats of judgment. Where is the prophet, the prudent, and the ancient? We have no statesmen at all today. What we have is a group of clever politicians who know how to compromise. I am not talking about a certain political party. I am simply saying that it is always the mark of a decadent age and the judgment of God when a nation is not producing great men.

Moving into the field of the arts -- what greatness do you see on the television screen? I get rather bored with the television talk programs. Generally the master of ceremonies

comes out and says, "I am going to introduce you to a great artist, a genius." And some little peanut comes out on stage, strums a guitar -- doesn't play any music at all -- just yells at the top of his voice. And he is hailed as a genius! Another man comes along who is introduced as a great literary light, and all that he has written is a dirty book. My friend, we lack greatness in this day, but we are not willing to admit it because we have become a proud nation.

Where is greatness in the field of education? We used to believe that the educators had the solution to the problems of the world. Today it is obvious that educators cannot control even their own campuses.

It is said that we used to have wooden ships and iron men, but now we have iron ships and wooden men. I would go further than that and call them paper doll men. Our leadership is just a string of paper dolls!

And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them [[Isa. 3:4](#)].

As far as ability is concerned, men in high positions today should be wearing diapers. Juvenile adults are our rulers, and they are totally incompetent. That is exactly what brought Israel down to ruin in that day. Their leaders had the mental level of children, and God sent them into captivity. He judged them.

And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable [[Isa. 3:5](#)].

My friend, it sounds as if Isaiah were talking about our day, but the same was true in his day. The child, the little college student, is saying, "Listen to me. I have something to say." I have been listening to them for years, and I haven't heard them say anything yet. One class is set against another class. "The people shall be oppressed, every one by another." We have groups of minorities who want to inflict their ways on others. Christians are a minority also, but certainly we are not being heard.

For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory [[Isa. 3:8](#)].

"Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen" -- that's what the prophet says. We don't have many of God's men in our day standing up, pointing at our nation, and saying, "Our cities are ruined," although it is as true as it was in Isaiah's time.

"Because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory." This is the key to the chapter, and it is the key to the ruin of Israel and of any other nation. God judges nations by their relationship to Him.

The problem with the United States of America is that God has been run out of Washington, D.C. God has been ruled out in every area of our lives. A few little men think they can rule the world. How we need to be humbled, and I think we have been humbled. Russia has humbled us. China has humbled us. And little Vietnam humbled us.

We are being humbled all over the world; yet we don't wake up. We continue merrily on our way, coasting downhill on our godly ancestry.

The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves [[Isa. 3:9](#)].

Sin is out in the open. What used to be done in the backyard has been moved to the front yard. What was done under cover is now done in the open. The boast is that we are more honest now. No, we're not more honest; we are the same hypocrites that our fathers were. They were hypocrites because they hid their sin, and we are hypocrites because we are sinning out in the open and trying to say that the sin is good! This is exactly what Israel was saying.

Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings [[Isa. 3:10](#)].

God promises to deliver His own people.

Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him [[Isa. 3:11](#)].

This is another way of saying, "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."

As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths [[Isa. 3:12](#)].

"Children are their oppressors." The greatest problem in our day is juvenile delinquency. The greatest increase in crime is among young people, and the age drops every year.

"Women rule over them." Oh, "women's lib" will not like Isaiah, and they won't like me any better. "O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." Whether women rulers are meant here or effeminate men is not clear. I think it is a little of both. The women's liberation movement is another sign of a decadent age. When women act like men, they are not coming up to a high level but are descending to the male level. The woman has been given a greater amount of tenderness, but when she becomes as blasé and brutal as a man, she actually becomes worse than he is. And that is the downfall of the nation. That was true in Israel's case, and it will be true in our own nation. Go to Italy and see the ruins of Pompeii, and then consider what removed the Romans from the earthly scene. The nation that once ruled the world collapsed -- not because they were attacked by someone on the outside, but because they fell from within.

Listen to Him now as He pleads with His people:

The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.

The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses [[Isa. 3:13-14](#)].

"The ancients" and "the princes" are the leaders of the nation. God lays the blame on the adult leadership. The juvenile problem did not originate with young people.

In Isaiah's time there were a few who were trying to get rich and rule over everyone else. "The spoil of the poor is in your houses." Godless capitalism and godless labor are big problems in our nation, and one is as bad as the other. The whole difficulty is that we are away from God. God is standing up ready to plead or ready to judge, and He will let the nation determine which it will be. We can have it either way. He will do one or the other.

Women's Dress (3:16-26)

Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet [[Isa. 3:16](#)].

What a picture of womanhood! The problem, of course, is in the heart. In [1Peter 3:1-4](#) we read, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation [or, conduct] coupled with fear. [This doesn't mean that she is to take abuse from him, but she is to live a godly life before him.] Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; [if you are trying to hold your husband with sex, you'll lose him]. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

When I counsel with young couples I always tell them that there are three cords that hold marriage together, and a threefold cord is not easily broken. There is the physical cord, and that is important. Also there is the psychological cord -- the same interests. Third, there is the spiritual cord -- the same love for God and His work. If a wife is trying to hold her husband with only her physical attraction, the time will come when he is no longer interested. This is what Peter is saying. A wife's attraction should be more than the way she dresses and styles her hair. Her beauty should be in the way she lives her life with a gentle and quiet spirit.

Isaiah pictures the women of his day as haughty and sexy, "mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet."

Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts [[Isa. 3:17](#)].

He is talking about a disease. Do you know that there is an epidemic of venereal disease in our nation right now? So many of our young girls look appealing, but they are like serpents along the way, as many a man is finding out to his sorrow.

In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon,

The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings,

The rings, and nose jewels,

The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the
wimples, and the crisping pins,

The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.

And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be
stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair
baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and
burning instead of beauty [[Isa. 3:18-24](#)].

Women's dress is the barometer of any civilization. When women's dress is modest it tells something about the nation as a whole.

In these last few verses twenty articles of women's wear are mentioned by name. There certainly is nothing wrong with a woman dressing in style -- if the style is not immodest. I feel that all of us should look the best we can with what we have, even though some of us don't have too much to work with. God is not condemning the women of Israel for dressing in the style of their day. He is talking about the inner life. They were haughty and brazen. Real adornment is beneath the skin, not from the skin outward. Women's dress is the key to a nation's morals.

Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate
shall sit upon the ground [[Isa. 3:25-26](#)].

There was a Roman medal which showed a woman weeping; the insignia beneath her read, Judea capta. It represented the captives of Israel. Because Israel did not heed the warnings God gave them, they went into captivity.

As I write this, the terrible loss of our young men in Vietnam is still fresh in our minds. Now we are a nation at peace, and we feel very comfortable. But, my friend, the bombs are yet to fall on our nation, which I believe will be God's judgment upon us.

Chapter 4

THEME: Conditions that did prevail during the Babylonian captivity and will prevail at the establishment of the Kingdom

This chapter is a continuation of one complete prophecy which began in chapter 2 and will conclude in chapter 5. In these chapters we actually have a synopsis of the entire Book of Isaiah, because he touches all the bases here that he will touch upon in the rest of the book.

Chapter 4 is the briefest chapter in the book; it is only six verses long. We have set before us a description of the conditions which prevailed at the time of the Babylonian captivity and also of the conditions which will exist during the Great Tribulation period right before the setting up of the messianic Kingdom.

The structure of the chapter is very simple. The first verse is the only one that depicts conditions during the time of the Great Tribulation, or the last days. The remainder of the chapter sets before the reader the preparation that will be necessary for entering the Kingdom. This section, of course, is entirely anticipatory.

And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying,
We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us
be called by thy name, to take away our reproach [[Isa. 4:1](#)].

These conditions will prevail because of the frightening casualties of war. That has been true of all wars, and these conditions will exist in the time of the Great Tribulation. In other words, because the manpower population will be so decimated by war, there will be a surplus of women, so much so that seven women will be willing to share one man in that day! And all of them will be willing to hold down a job. I suppose a man will do nothing in the world but keep books for the women and make sure that they turn in their proper share. It is an awful condition that will prevail. After World War II we experienced, to an extent, a manpower shortage in this country and also following our involvement in the Vietnam War. At that time, when I heard that there was something like a surplus of 80,000 women, I kidded my wife that she had better take good care of me as there just weren't enough men to go around!

In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious,
and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them
that are escaped of Israel [[Isa. 4:2](#)].

"In that day" refers to the Day of the Lord. This phrase will occur again and again in Isaiah (and in all the prophets), and it will be mentioned in the New Testament. Joel particularly will have something to say about it. It begins as every Hebrew day always begins -- at sundown. It begins with darkness and moves to the dawn. It begins with the Great Tribulation and goes on into the millennial Kingdom.

There is also a reference in this verse to the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is "the branch." There are eighteen Hebrew words translated by the one English word branch. All of them refer to the Lord Jesus. In this verse the word branch means "sprout." Later, we are going to be told that He is a branch out of a dry ground. He is something green that has sprung up in the desert.

And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that
remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is
written among the living in Jerusalem [[Isa. 4:3](#)].

There will be those of God's people, both of Israel and the Gentiles, during the Great Tribulation, who will survive that period. (Those who are martyred will, of course, be resurrected at the end of that time.) In Matthew the Lord Jesus expressed it in a way that may seem strange, but He is looking at the end of the Tribulation when He says, ". . . he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" ([Matt. 24:13](#)). Well, they were sealed at the beginning to make sure they got through it. The Shepherd is able to keep His own sheep, and therefore they are going to endure unto the end. We have the same thought in [Revelation 7](#) which speaks of that great company, both Jew and Gentile, who were sealed at the beginning of the Great Tribulation and came through that period.

When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning [[Isa. 4:4](#)].

[Zechariah 13:1](#) tells us, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

God's people must be prepared to enter the Kingdom. This brings up a very pertinent question. Each year as we stand on the threshold of a new year, we say we are going to do better. We have been saying the same thing for years. My question is, "Are you fit today for heaven?" Suppose God took you to heaven as you are right now. Would you be fit for heaven? I cannot answer this question for you, but God is going to have to do a great deal of repair work on Vernon McGee to make him ready for heaven. That is what life is all about: it is a school to prepare us for eternity. Many people make a sad mistake to think that this life is all there is. Preparation is made on earth for eternity. Suppose God took you to heaven as you are, would you be a square peg in a round hole? I am afraid I would be. Beloved, it does not yet appear what we shall be. He is going to have to make some changes.

And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence [[Isa. 4:5](#)].

The glory of God will be upon every house in the Kingdom, not just upon the temple. What a glorious thing that will be!

And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain [[Isa. 4:6](#)].

Security will come to the nation Israel in that day -- at last. Today Israel does not have peace. Therefore this prophecy is not being fulfilled. The Jews are not back in the land with every man dwelling under his vine and fig tree in peace.

Note that peace always follows grace, mercy, and cleansing. The problem has never been with a political party. The real problem has never been with a foreign country. The problem is in the human heart. We war because it is in our hearts. Man is a warlike creature because he is a sinner and he refuses to deal with that question. There will be one war right after the other until the heart of man is changed.

Chapter 5

THEME: The song of the vineyard; the six woes that follow

This chapter brings us to the end of the section which was begun in chapter 2. The first seven verses are the song of the vineyard which tells of the sins of the nation Israel and the coming captivity. The balance of the chapter gives the six woes or the six specific sins which bring down the judgment of God upon the nation. The penalty for each sin is listed.

The Song Of The Vineyard (5:1-7)

Those who can read the song of the vineyard in Hebrew tell me that it is without doubt one of the most beautiful songs that has ever been written. There is nothing quite like it; there is nothing to rival it. It is a musical symphony, and it is absolutely impossible to reproduce in English. It is truly a song and comparable to any of the psalms.

The vineyard is the house of Israel ([v. 7](#)). Thus, the vineyard becomes one of the two figures in Scripture that are taken from the botanical world to represent the whole nation of Israel. The fig tree is the other figure that is used.

Before His death our Lord gave a parable of the vineyard which obviously referred to the whole house of Israel (see [Matt. 21:33-46](#)). In Isaiah the prophet announces the imminent captivity of the northern kingdom into Assyria and of the southern kingdom into Babylon. In Matthew the Lord Jesus Christ showed that God had given Israel a second chance in their return from the seventy-year Babylonian captivity, but the nation's rejection of the Son of God would usher in a more extensive and serious dispersion.

Now listen to the song of the vineyard:

Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching
his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill
[\[Isa. 5:1\]](#).

"My beloved" is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world.

"A very fruitful hill" -- there is nothing wrong with the soil. The problem is with the vineyard itself; that is, with the vine. [Verse 7](#) makes it quite clear that the vineyard is the house of Israel; it is Judah. It is not the church or something else. This is clear; we do not have to guess at these things.

God is again inviting us into court to consider His charges against Israel. And, my friend, the minute you listen to Him and to His charge against Israel, you will find yourself condemned.

And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted
it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and
also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring
forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes [\[Isa. 5:2\]](#).

God took the nation Israel out of Egypt and placed them in the Promised Land. He expected them to produce the fruits of righteousness and required them to glorify His name. They failed ignominiously.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I
pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard [\[Isa. 5:3\]](#).

God asks these people to judge, to equate the difference between God and Israel. Very candidly, friend, when you look at your own life are you ready to complain against God? I know how I whined and howled when I got cancer. I thought the Lord was being unfair. Then I had the opportunity of lying alone on that hospital bed and looking at my life. My

friend, God wasn't wrong -- I was wrong and I needed to face up to it. We need to get rid of the idea that somehow we are something special. God is not going to do anything to us that is unjust. He is not going to do anything that is wrong. You and I are wrong; God isn't wrong.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? [[Isa. 5:4](#)].

God states that He made every provision on His part for them to produce the fruits of righteousness. Their failure under these circumstances becomes serious indeed.

And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it [[Isa. 5:5-6](#)].

This is a clear prediction of the forthcoming captivities of both the kingdoms. For over five hundred years God had kept the great nations of the world off the land bridge of three continents -- Palestine. He put a wall around the children of Israel. God would not let anybody touch them, though many times He could have judged them. But God says, "You are My vineyard. I have hedged you in, but now I am breaking down the wall." First Syria, then Assyria, then Babylon -- they all poured into Israel's land and laid it waste. And in spite of everything that has been done in that land today, it is still a pretty desolate looking place. God has judged it.

"I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it." For over a thousand years, the former (fall) and the latter (spring) rains did not fall. That is why that land is so desolate today. The former rains, I understand, have begun, but not the latter.

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry [[Isa. 5:7](#)].

You don't have to guess whom the prophet is talking about. The vineyard refers to the whole house of Israel, and this verse makes that crystal clear. And in that vineyard God "looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."

The Six Woes (5:8-30)

Once again God is going to spell it all out. Six woes are mentioned here, and each one tells of a certain sin for which God is judging Israel. If you want to apply these to your life or to the life of our nation, you can do it. But the interpretation is for Israel; it has already been fulfilled for them. We can certainly make application to our own hearts and lives, however.

Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth! [[Isa. 5:8](#)].

This is the first sin of Israel. What is it? This sin is the lust of the eye; more specifically, it is covetousness. [Colossians 3:5](#) tells us: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Covetousness is idolatry. It is a big business expanding at the expense of the little man. That is what happened in Israel -- the little man was squeezed out. It was done so that great fortunes might be accumulated. The only excuse for such expansion is the insatiable greed for more property and possessions. God will judge the people for that.

It is a sad story that we have here. The picture is one of a great complex of farms. In Isaiah's day the people were agricultural people. They built big corporations, big complexes. This was not done for the good of the little man, the small operator. It was done to accumulate wealth. Anything to which you give yourself completely becomes your religion. Many people today are worshiping at the altar of covetousness.

Covetousness is a mean-looking god. It has the face of a silver dollar or a dollar bill. It is one thing that brought down Israel and for which God judged them. Instead of following God's instructions, they were beginning to take all of the richness from the soil. We are doing the same thing today. We are living in a world which is actually depleted of its energy. We are frantically searching for oil, for any kind of energy that can be used. Why? Because men are covetous, and that covetousness is depleting the earth of its riches. That is a judgment of God.

In mine ears said the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant.

Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah [[Isa. 5:9-10](#)].

God is simply saying that even though they expand their lands, the yield will not be great because there will be a famine which will decimate the crop. Extended holdings will not produce a bumper crop at all.

The earth you and I are living on is running short of energy. We are running out of oil. We are running out of arable lands. This subject of ecology is an important matter. Pollution is destroying much of the earth. One of these days we are going to be on a desolate planet. We are quickly running out of energy. If you are planning on taking a trip, you had better go now, because there is going to be a shortage of fuel. It may not happen in our lifetime, but there are those who believe that it will be in our lifetime. This is the judgment that God made on the nation Israel in that day.

Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!

And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands [[Isa. 5:11-12](#)].

This is the second woe, the second sin. Drunkenness and pleasure on a national scale are the sins mentioned here, and they lead to the deadening of all spiritual perception.

I notice that the news media do not release today, as they did a number of years ago, the number of alcoholics that we have in this country. The last report I got, which was several years ago, was that there were ten million alcoholics in the United States. They do put in the paper what is done with the tax money the liquor industry pays. It goes to take care of the alcoholics and to maintain police forces who take care of the accidents caused by drunk drivers! Of course, no one can pay for the lives of the innocent victims taken in such useless accidents. No one knows how many decisions are made in our government by people who have just come from a cocktail party. These are the things that lower the morals of a nation. They destroy a nation and eat at its vitals like a cancer. Such a nation is on the verge of falling prey to an enemy without.

Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst [[Isa. 5:13](#)].

The majority of the people in this country think it is rather sophisticated to drink, that it is the thing to do. I was very much interested in an article in which the man being interviewed was the director of a therapeutic community for drug addicts in New York. One of the questions he was asked was, "Is there anything parents can do to prevent children from turning to drugs?" This man, whose answers indicated that he probably was not a Christian, said that of paramount importance is an attitude in the home of not using drugs, pills, or alcohol as a means of solving life's problems. He went on to say that he didn't mean that taking an occasional social drink was taboo (of course, he would not go so far as to say that!), but that the old rule, "Monkey see, monkey do," is just as valid on this issue as it is on any other. He said that youngsters who grow up in an atmosphere of drug abuse will be among the first to try marijuana or pills when confronted with their own problems.

Father, mother, if you continue to drink cocktails -- and I see it in many restaurants as I travel across the country -- don't be surprised if your Willie or Mary gets on dope. They will probably move in that direction. After all, why do you drink? The problem of young people on drugs started in the home where parents drink in order to face life. That is what destroys the home and the nation. Drunkenness is one of the things that brought down Israel. What about our nation?

Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it [[Isa. 5:14](#)].

The word translated "hell" in this verse is actually "the grave." It is not a reference to the lake of fire as we think of hell today. It is the Hebrew word sheol. It means that "the grave demands." You find this same word in [Proverbs 30:16](#) which says, "The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough." Death, or the grave, (both satisfactory translations of sheol) is never satisfied. This is the question to ask when you stand at the grave of someone: Where is he? Job

asked this question, "But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" ([Job 14:10](#)). That is the question everybody is going to have to ask.

Hell at first did not have the idea of a locality, but in time it was thought that since God was in heaven or above, hell or the grave must be below or down. In the New Testament the word *hades* is the same as the Old Testament *sheol*. The Lord Jesus used this word when He said, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell [*hades*] . . ." ([Matt. 11:23](#)). The Lord was not talking about a literal descent into the heart of the earth. He simply meant that Capernaum was going to be brought down, and all you have to do is look at the ruins of that place today to know that what He said was true. We always attach strong moral connotations to the terms of direction, up and down: up towards God and down towards hell. Here Isaiah is saying that the nation of Israel will be brought down. They are going to be taken into captivity, they are going to be brought down to the grave, and the glory of the nation will be turned into dust because of her drunkenness and pleasure.

Rudyard Kipling was a prophet as well as a poet when he wrote in his "Recessional":

"Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre."

Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope [[Isa. 5:18](#)].

This can be translated: "Woe to those whose wickedness is helped by words of lying, who in their pride and unbelief the wrath of God define." You can make a poem out of it, you see. This is the third woe, or the third sin. This is the picture of a nation giving itself in abandon to sin without shame or conscience.

That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it! [[Isa. 5:19](#)].

In other words, they challenge God to do anything about their sin. It is interesting to note that no penalty is mentioned. The very silence here is frightening: the penalty is too awful to mention. The history of the deportation of the nation to Babylon tells something of the frightful judgment of God upon a people who sin with impunity against Him and defy Him. God will judge them.

Do you remember [Psalm 137](#)? In that psalm Israel prayed against Babylon. They prayed that there would be an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. They said, "Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" ([Ps. 137:9](#)). That is horrible beyond words, but that is the judgment that came to Israel. My friend, God is a God of love, but when you reach the place where you defy Him and turn your back on Him, there is no hope for you. Judgment comes. There are just too many instances in history to deny this fact, unless you want to shut your eyes to them.

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! [[Isa. 5:20](#)].

This is the fourth sin against which the fourth woe is leveled. It is an attempt to destroy God's standards of right and wrong by substituting man's values which contradict His moral standards. This is the confusion that comes upon a nation when they abandon God after He has blessed them in the past for their acknowledgment of Him. England is a present-day example of this, and America is fast deteriorating in the same direction.

We have this confusion in our standards of marriage today. I listened to a very beautiful little girl tell her story on a television interview program. She was living with a man to whom she was not married, and the reason she gave was that she was being honest -- she did not believe in being a hypocrite. I have news for her: she is not only a hypocrite and dishonest, she knows that what she is doing is wrong and that she should be married. God says she is living in adultery. I don't care, my friend, what you might think about it -- that's what God says.

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! [[Isa. 5:21](#)].

This is the fifth woe, the sin of pride. God hates this above all else. [Proverbs 6:16-17](#) tells us, "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood." Pride was the sin of Satan according to [1 Timothy 3:6](#), "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." Pride is number one on God's hate parade.

Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:

Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! [[Isa. 5:22-23](#)].

This is the sixth and last woe. Here a people have become so sodden with drunkenness that they have lost their sense of justice. Injustice and crookedness prevail, and the righteous man is falsely accused. No nation can long survive which drops so low in morals that it loses its sense of values.

Ours is a day when people are saying that wrong is right and right is wrong. In my younger days I was in a little theater group, and I remember memorizing a line from The Great Divide: "Wrong is wrong from the moment it happens 'til the crack of doom, and all the angels in heaven working overtime cannot make it different or less by a hair." My friend, wrong is still wrong.

Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel [[Isa. 5:24](#)].

"As the fire devoureth the stubble." Though the process of deterioration and rottenness is slow and unobserved, the penalty comes like a fire in the stubble. It is fast and furious and cannot be deterred. It is the anger of the Lord bursting forth in judgment. It moves the frightful judgment of God in the last days.

In [Matthew 12:20](#) the Lord Jesus Christ said, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." He was quoting from [Isaiah 42:3](#). There are certain sins that bring their own judgment; drunkenness is one, and drug abuse is another. I could give many instances of men I have seen engaged in these sins, and the sin worked in their own lives, in the lives of their families, and in their bodies until it destroyed them. God didn't have to do a thing. The smoking flax will break into flame, and that bruised reed will die. The very sin that we commit is the sin that will destroy us.

When I was a young man in Nashville, Tennessee, I went to a dentist who was also a good friend. One day he told me something which had happened in that town several years before. He told me that one of the most reputable doctors in the city had headed up a dope ring. It was difficult for the law to reach him because of his position. One day the doctor tightened up on the dope in order to get a higher price. For a brief period of time he cut off the supply of dope. This, of course, pushed the price up higher. During that time both his son and daughter were exposed as addicts. He knew nothing about their problem until he cut off the dope supply. That man had the shock of his life, and it apparently led to his death, which occurred shortly afterward. God doesn't have to put His hand in and judge every time. In many instances He just lets sin take its course.

The sin of drinking is all around us today. God doesn't do anything about it. He doesn't have to. Drunkenness will bring its own judgment. Judgment will come to the individual, and it will come to the nation. Those of us who have been in the ministry for a long time have seen drinking increase through the years, and I have seen some heavy drinkers be converted and turn to the Lord. But some of them would leave a bottle in the icebox, just in case. That is what leads many back into the awful sin of drinking. That is what Paul is talking about in [Romans 8:12](#) when he says, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh." In other words, make no arrangements with the flesh to do what it wants to do. Don't leave a bottle in the refrigerator. Take the bottle out and break it. Many of us kid ourselves about our sins, but some of these sins touch all of us, I am sure.

Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still [[Isa. 5:25](#)].

"Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people." This is a strange verse for many who want to talk about just the love of God. The love of God is real, and you cannot keep Him from loving you; but God hates sin, my friend. If you are going to love sin, still He will love you, but you can expect His judgment. The anger of the Lord is kindled against His people -- not against the neighbors.

"But his hand is stretched out still." If Israel had gone to the Lord and trusted Him, He would have delivered them. The judgment of God is in the Book of Isaiah but so is His grace. The government of God and the grace of God -- they are not in conflict. If you are going to continue in sin, if you refuse the grace of God, then you will know what the government of God is.

In the rest of this chapter we see an accumulation of the judgment of God.

And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof [[Isa. 5:30](#)].

Take a good look at the land of Israel today. Many people who have traveled to Israel come back and say, "It certainly is wonderful. We are seeing the fulfillment of prophecy. The land is being reclaimed." They go on and on about how prophecy is being fulfilled. I don't see it that way at all. I see a people still in darkness. I see a people far from God. I see a people who are not living in peace and who need God. They are living in fear and are in great danger in that land today. My heart goes out to them. This is the judgment of God.

Consider the following poem:

Our Prayerless Sin (5:8-30)

We have not wept for thy grief,
Israel, scattered, driven,
Shut up to darkened unbelief
While we have heaven.
We have not prayed for thy peace,
Jerusalem forsaken;
Thy root's increase, by God's great grace,
We age-long have partaken.
How trod thy street our Saviour's feet;
How fell His tears for thee;
How, loving Him, can we forget,
Nor long thy joys to see.
Zion, thy God remembers thee
Though we so hard have been;
Zion, thy God remembers thee,
With blood-bought right to cleanse, may He
Remove our prayerless sin.
-- Selected and revised

God is punishing His own people.

Chapter 6

THEME: The call and commission of Isaiah to the prophetic office

Chronologically, as well as logically, the Book of Isaiah begins with this chapter, which constitutes the crisis in the life of Isaiah and brings him into the prophetic office. Prior to this, we have no record of his life or relationship to God. His ministry began at the death of King Uzziah.

The Vision Of The Lord Seen By Isaiah (6:1-10)

In [verses 1-4](#) are the time, place, person, glory, and holiness of the Lord in the vision seen by Isaiah. Now notice the time, the place, and the person:

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple [[Isa. 6:1](#)].

Isaiah opens this chapter on a very doleful note taking us to the funeral of Uzziah. Uzziah has been a good king. Now he is dead. It is the belief of many that he was the last great king of the southern kingdom of Judah and that after his death the glory of the Lord was no longer to be seen. I am not sure but what that is true. Uzziah brought the Philistines, the Arabians, and the Ammonites into subjection. He had ruled for fifty-two years, and the nation had been blessed materially during that period according to God's promise. As F. Delitzsch says, "The national glory of Israel died out too with King Uzziah and has never been recovered to this day." I heartily concur with that statement.

In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah is thinking, Good King Uzziah is dead, and things are going to the bowwows now. Israel will be taken captive. Prosperity will cease. A depression will come, and famine will follow. In that frame of mind Isaiah does what every person ought to do -- he goes into the temple. He goes to the proper place, the place where he could meet with God. [Psalm 29:9](#) says, ". . . in his temple doth every one speak of his glory." In God's temple Isaiah makes the discovery that the true King of the nation is not dead.

"I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple" -- God is on the throne.

Isaiah has already told us not to put confidence in man, whose breath is in his nostrils. When man exhales, he doesn't know for sure that he ever will be able to inhale again. A man can have a heart attack and die, just like that. Don't put your confidence in man. Old King Uzziah is dead. Yes, it is true, and the throne looks pretty bleak right now, but behind the earthly throne is the heavenly throne. Isaiah sees the Lord sitting upon a throne.

That is a vision that some of God's people need in this day. I see no reason for being pessimistic. This is the greatest day in the history of the world. I would rather live right now than in any other period of time. Somebody says, "Oh, look at the terrible condition of the world. Look at our nation and the deteriorating condition in our cities." Well, the Lord said it was going to be that way. He said that tares were going to be sown in among the wheat. And He was going to let them both grow together. My business today is sowing the seed of the Word of God. I know that it is going to bring forth a harvest. And it is heading up today -- there is no question about that. We don't need to be disturbed. God will take care of the harvest. Our business is to sow the seed; that is, to get the Word of God out to needy hearts.

This is a great day in which to live. Do you know that the Word of God is going out to more people than it ever has before? Even my radio broadcast is reaching more people in a half hour than I was able to reach in all my years of preaching behind a pulpit. And the message is going around the world! I realize the world conditions are alarming. The tares are really growing, but we have a good stand of wheat also. The wheat is growing right along. It is thrilling to be sowing the Word of God in this day!

When Isaiah goes into the temple, he finds that the Lord is still on the throne. And some of us need to be reminded that God is still on the throne in our day. He still hears and answers prayers. He is still doing wonderful things. Isaiah also makes another discovery when he goes into the temple. He finds out that God is high and lifted up and that His train fills the temple. That is the second thing we need to discover about God. God is high and lifted up, and He will not compromise with sin.

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly [[Isa. 6:2](#)].

Seraphim are around the throne of God. This is one of the few mentions of these created intelligences in Scripture. Practically nothing is known concerning them. Seraph means "to burn." It is the word used in connection with the sin offerings and judgment. Apparently the seraphim are in contrast to the cherubim. The seraphim search out sin, and the cherubim protect the holiness of God. Never is the word seraph connected with the sweet incense or sweet savor offerings, those offerings which speak of the person of Christ. The seraph is active, and the cherub is passive. We will find both of them in the Books of Ezekiel and Revelation as the "living creatures." The seraphim in Isaiah's vision are protecting the holiness of God. He is "high and lifted up."

God will not compromise with evil. I thank Him for that. He will not compromise with evil in your life nor in my life, because evil and sin have brought all of the sorrows in this world. Sin is that which puts gray in the hair, creates the tottering step and the stooped shoulder. It is the thing that breaks up homes and lives and fills the grave. I am glad that God does not compromise with it. God says that He hates sin and He intends to destroy it and remove it from this universe. Today our God is moving forth uncompromisingly, unhesitatingly, and undeviatingly against sin. He does not intend to accept the white flag of surrender from it. He intends to drive sin from His universe. That is what God says. He is high and lifted up. My friend, you and I are going to have to bow before Him. When Isaiah saw God on the throne, it brought him down upon his face. Oh, how desperately the church needs another vision of God, not just of His love, but of His holiness and righteousness! Because God is holy, He moves in judgment against sin -- and He has never asked me to apologize for Him. So I won't. God is angry against sin, and He will punish those who engage in it. He says He will.

He also says that He is your Friend and will save you. But you have to come His way. You have to put your faith and trust in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In [John 14:6](#) Jesus said, ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory [[Isa. 6:3](#)].

This pictures the holiness and glory of our God. He is high and lifted up; and, if we would see Him today in that position, we would be delivered from low living. It would also deliver some folk from this easy familiarity that they seem to have with Jesus. They talk about Him as if He were a buddy and as if they could speak to Him in any way they please. My friend, you cannot rush into the presence of God. He doesn't permit it. You

come to the Father through Christ. This is the only way He can be approached. You can never come into the presence of the Father because of who you are. You come into His presence because you are in Christ. The Lord Jesus made that very clear when He said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." If you are His child, you can come with boldness to the throne of grace, but you cannot come to Him on any other basis.

And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke [[Isa. 6:4](#)].

"The voice of him that cried" is the voice of the seraphim as they proclaim God's holiness.

What effect is this going to have on Isaiah?

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts [[Isa. 6:5](#)].

Isaiah was God's man before he had this experience, but it still had a tremendous effect on him. The reaction of Isaiah to such a vision is revolutionary. He sees himself as he really is in the presence of God -- undone. It reveals to him his condition. When he had seen God, he could see himself. The problem with many of us today is that we don't walk in the light of the Word of God. If we did, we would see ourselves. That is what John is talking about in the first chapter of his first epistle: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth [keeps on cleansing] us from all sin" ([1John 1:7](#)). If we walk in the light of His Word, we are going to see exactly what Isaiah saw -- that we are undone and men of unclean lips. You have never really seen the Lord, my friend, if you feel that you are worthy or merit something or have some claim upon God.

Job had an experience similar to Isaiah's, and his reaction was, "I abhor myself." Job was a self-righteous man. He could maintain his integrity in the presence of his friends who were attempting to tear him to bits. They told him that he was a rotten sinner, but he looked them straight in the eye and said, "As far as I know, I am a righteous man." From his viewpoint he was right, and he won the match against them. But he was not perfect. When Job came into the presence of God, he no longer wanted to talk about maintaining his righteousness. When Job really saw who he was, he said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" ([Job 42:5-6](#)). If you walk in the light of the Word of God, you will see yourself, and you will know that even as a child of God you need the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse you from all sin.

You will find that other men had the same reaction when they came into the presence of God. John, on the Isle of Patmos, wrote, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead . . ." ([Rev. 1:17](#)). When Daniel saw the Lord, he said, "Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength" ([Dan. 10:8](#)). That was also the experience of Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul the apostle. After Paul met the Lord, he no longer saw himself as a self-righteous Pharisee, but as a lost sinner in need of salvation. He then

could say, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" ([Phil. 3:7](#)). He saw his need of Jesus Christ.

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar [[Isa. 6:6](#)].

This "live coal" has come from the burnt altar where sin had been dealt with. In the next chapter we will see the prediction of the birth of Christ, but it is not the incarnation of Christ that saves us, it is His death upon the Cross. For this reason, Isaiah needs the live coal from off the burnt altar, which is symbolic of Christ's death. This living coal represents the cleansing blood of Christ that keeps on cleansing us from all sin.

And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged [[Isa. 6:7](#)].

Isaiah is a man of unclean lips, and the condition for cleansing is confession: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" ([1John 1:9](#)). I believe it would be more accurate to say that this glowing coal is symbolic of none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the One high and lifted up on the throne, and He was the One lifted up on the Cross. It is absolutely essential that He be lifted up, because He came down to this earth and became one of us that He might become ". . . the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" ([John 1:29](#)).

And so the lips of this man Isaiah are cleansed. I take it that this act of putting the coal on his lips was just an external manifestation of what happened in the inner man. It is what proceeds out of the heart of a man that goes through the lips; and, when the lips are cleansed, it means that the heart is cleansed also.

There was a man in the New Testament who also was "undone." His name was Paul, and he cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" ([Rom. 7:24](#)). When Paul said this, he was not a lost sinner but a saint of God, learning the lesson from God that he needed to walk in the Spirit because he could not live for God by himself. Living for God can only be accomplished by divine grace. Man's responsibility is to confess his sinfulness and his inability to please God. Therefore, we need to have the redemption of Christ applied to our lives again and again and again.

After Isaiah's lips are cleansed, something happens:

Also I heard the voices of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me [[Isa. 6:8](#)].

It is interesting that up to this time Isaiah had never heard the call of God.

I think many Christians have never felt like they were called to do anything for God because they have never been cleansed. They have not seen this great need as Christians. God is not going to use a dirty vessel, I can assure you of that. It is true that God does bless His Word even when it is given out by those who are playing around with sin, but in time God judges them severely. I don't dare mention any names, but I have known

certain ministers who for awhile enjoyed the blessing of God. Then they got into sin, and it wasn't long until the judgment of God fell upon them.

Isaiah heard God's call: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" I don't need to call attention to the fact that you have both the singular and the plural in this verse, and I believe it sets forth the Trinity. Isaiah's response was, "Here am I; send me." Isaiah heard God's call for the first time and responded to it, as a cleansed individual will do. There are too many people today who are asked to do something in the church who first of all ought to get cleansed and straightened out with the Lord. They need to have their lips touched with a living coal. They need to confess the sins in their lives, because their service will be sterile and frustrating until that takes place.

Now notice the commission to Isaiah:

And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not [[Isa. 6:9](#)].

The message Isaiah is told to give is very, very strange. "This people" means, of course, the nation of Israel.

Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed [[Isa. 6:10](#)].

At first glance it looks as if the prophet is being sent to those who are blind, deaf, and hardened people, but I think I can safely say that God never hardens hearts that would otherwise be soft. God simply brings the hardness to the surface; He does not make the heart hard. He does not make blind the eyes of those who want to see, but apart from His intervention they would never see. Nothing but the foolish blasphemy of men would say that God hardens or blinds.

Isaiah's job was to take a message of light to the people. Light merely reveals the blindness of the people. In darkness they do not know if they are blind or not. [Matthew 13:14-15](#) records the words of our Lord: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Let me illustrate this. When I was a boy in Oklahoma, I used to have to milk a stubborn old cow. When it grew dark early in the evenings, I would have to take a lantern out to the barn with me. When I reached the corncrib two things would happen. The rats ran for cover -- I could hear them taking off -- and the little birds that were roosting up in the rafters would begin to twitter around and sing. The presence of light caused one to flee and the other to sing. Now, did the light make a rat a rat? No. He was a rat before the light got there. The light only revealed that he was a rat. When the Lord Jesus came into the world, He was the Light of the world. In His presence two things happened: He caused the birds to sing and the rats to run.

Let me illustrate this same thought with another story. Years ago there was a big explosion in a mine in West Virginia, and many men were blocked off in the mine because of the cave-ins. After several days a rescue party dug through to the trapped men. And one of the first things they managed to get through to them was a light. After the light came on, a fine young miner said, "Why doesn't someone turn on a light?" The other miners looked at him startled, suddenly realizing that he had been blinded by the explosion. But it took a light to reveal that he was blind.

God blinds nobody. He hardens no heart. When the light shines in, it reveals what an individual is, and that is what Isaiah means. That is exactly why the Lord Jesus Christ quoted this passage.

Paul wrote, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" ([2Cor. 2:14-16](#)). I have often said, as I have given an invitation to receive Christ, "If you have rejected Christ -- if you come into this church as a lost person and are leaving a lost person -- I am no longer your friend, because you cannot now go into the presence of God and say that you never heard the gospel."

You see, the light of the gospel revealed that they were blind, and they rejected Jesus Christ. He didn't make them blind, but He only revealed their blindness.

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" -- we always triumph. There are those who like to boast of the number who are being saved, but I would much rather boast of the fact that thousands and even several millions of people are hearing the Word of God. My business is sowing the seed, the Word of God. It is the business of the Spirit of God to touch the hearts of those who hear.

Chapter 7

THEME: Prediction of the virgin birth of Immanuel and of Assyria's invasion of Judah

[Verses 1](#) and 2 of this chapter speak of the civil war between Judah and Israel with Syria allied to Israel, resulting in a state of fear in Judah. [Verses 3-9](#) tell us about the conduit of the upper pool where Isaiah and his son Shear-jashub meet Ahaz, king of Judah, with an encouraging word from the Lord. [Verses 10-16](#) speak of the confirmation by the sign of the virgin birth to the house of David when Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign. [Verses 17-25](#) tell of the coming invasion of the land of Judah by Assyria, which is predicted as a judgment.

And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it [[Isa. 7:1](#)].

In [2Kings 16:2](#) we read, "Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father." The prophecy of chapter 7 follows the call and

commission of Isaiah in chapter 6, which took place at the death of Uzziah. Jotham, his son, succeeded him to the throne; and he reigned sixteen years. In [2Kings 15:32-34](#) we are told, "In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign. Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD: he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done." Jotham was a good king, as was his father Uzziah. Ahaz, Jotham's son, succeeds him, and he does that which is evil.

Ahaz will reign for sixteen years, and he will be a very bad king indeed. There will be a time of civil war during his reign. It will be a time of great distress in Israel. If you want to know just how bad things were, the record is in [2Kings 16:3-4](#): "But he [Ahaz] walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree." Ahaz is a bad egg, I can assure you of that, and he is frightened because Israel in the north teamed up with Syria, and they are coming against him. Although they do not prevail at first, Ahaz has every reason to believe that they finally will prevail.

And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind [[Isa. 7:2](#)].

Ahaz cannot expect the blessing of God upon him or the nation. As a result, the alliance of Rezin, king of Syria, with Pekah, king of Israel, terrifies him and his people. Previously both Syria and Israel had attempted to take Judah. Alone they could not prevail, but together Ahaz is confident that they will be able to take Jerusalem. In spite of the fact that Ahaz is a godless king, God is not yet ready to let the people of Judah go into captivity. As we already know from history, Judah is not going to go into captivity in the north, but many years later they will be taken captive to Babylon.

Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field [[Isa. 7:3](#)].

Because God is not ready to deliver the kingdom of Judah into captivity, He wants to encourage the king so he will not make an unwise and frantic alliance with Egypt. So God tells Isaiah to meet with Ahaz.

There are several things we need to look at in this verse. First of all, Isaiah is to meet Ahaz "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool." The place where he is to meet the king is suggestive. It is from this conduit that the life-giving waters pour for thirsty Jerusalem. It is here that the people can quench their thirst. You can't get much satisfaction from a pipe filled with water -- you must have a spigot on it somewhere. You must go to the place where the water comes out of the pipe.

Now this is symbolic of the fact that you are not going to get any blessing out of that house of David, but way down at the end of his line One is coming as the "water of life." That One was the Lord Jesus Christ. He came in the line of David to bring the water of life.

Isaiah is to meet the king at the upper "pool." The word for "pool" is *berekah* from the root word meaning "blessing." I can assure you that in that land a pool of water is a blessing. This same word used in [Psalm 84:6](#), ". . . the rain also filleth the pools [*berakah*]," everywhere else is rendered "blessing." This is a very interesting thing.

Notice also that it is "the upper pool." Upper is the word used over thirty times for the Most High. You may recall that it was said of the one who came out to minister to Abraham that he was the priest of the Most High God (see [Gen. 14:18](#)). Now the blessing of the Most High God was given "at the end of the conduit" when Jesus came into the world.

"In the highway of the fuller's field." The highway is a path which is elevated above the surrounding land to keep the traveler's feet clean. The spiritual application of the word highway is made clear in [Proverbs 16:17](#): "The highway of the upright is to depart from evil. . . ." This highway is the way of holiness. . . . Isaiah will use this same figure in [Isaiah 35:8](#): "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness. . . ." This very interesting symbolism refers to the One who is the way, the truth, and the life. The psalmist wrote in [Psalm 84:5](#): "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them." That is, blessed is the one who has the One who is the way, the truth, and the life.

Notice also that the meeting was to take place in the "fuller's field." The fuller's field was the place where folk went to wash their clothes. It was the laundry of that day. Applying this to our own lives, if we want to get our lives cleansed, we must come to the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, ". . . ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" ([John 15:3](#)).

So you see, it is no accident that Isaiah is sent to this very interesting place for his meeting with Ahaz. It has a wonderful spiritual meaning for us.

Isaiah is told to take his son Shear-jashub with him. That is quite a name for a boy, but it is nothing compared to the second son whom we shall meet in chapter 8. Shear-jashub means "a remnant shall return." The interesting thing is that God has always had a remnant that was true to Him.

And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,

Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal:

Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.

And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established [[Isa. 7:4-9](#)].

The tenor of the message is to let Ahaz know that he need not fear the alliance of his two enemies in the north. God has determined that their venture will be a failure. The problem is, how will Ahaz know it? To begin with, he is a skeptic, a doubter, and an unbeliever. How will he be convinced that what Isaiah is saying is true?

God has never asked anyone to believe anything that does not rest upon a foundation. Faith does not mean to move blindly into some area and say, "Oh, I am trusting God." That is very foolish. God never asks us to do that. For example, in our salvation we do not bring a little lamb to offer as a sacrifice; our faith rests upon the historical facts of the death, the burial and the resurrection of the Son of God. God never asks us to take a leap in the dark. He asks us to believe and trust something which rests upon a firm foundation, and it is the only foundation, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" ([1Cor. 3:11](#)). If any person is an honest unbeliever and sincerely wants to know God, he will come to a saving faith. Folk with whom I have dealt who say that they cannot believe are not being honest. For example, a young fellow in San Francisco told me, "Oh, I want to believe; I am searching for the truth." There he was, living with a girl in an adulterous relationship and saying that he was searching for the truth! The fact of the matter is that no man's eyes are blindfolded unless he himself chooses to be blindfolded. If a person really wants to know God and will give up his sin and turn to Christ, God will make Himself real to him. In our day the problem is that a great many folk do not really mean business with God.

That is the problem with King Ahaz -- he doesn't mean business with God. Listen to him --

Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above [[Isa. 7:10-11](#)].

God knows that Ahaz does not have faith, and He is willing to give the king faith; but Ahaz is nothing but a pious fraud -- and there are a lot of those around today. Listen to his false piety:

But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD [[Isa. 7:12](#)].

Isn't that sweet of him? He sounds so nice, but he is one of the biggest hypocrites you will find in Scripture. This sort of thing is sickening, and I believe God feels that way about it.

And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? [[Isa. 7:13](#)].

I hope you won't mind my telling a little story. One day, in a Sunday school class for junior boys and girls, the teacher was telling the story about the Good Samaritan. As she related the parable, she was painting a vivid picture. She told how the man fell among thieves, how he was beaten up, and blood was gushing out from the wounds in his body. She told about the priest and the Pharisee, and finally she came to the Good Samaritan. She wanted to clinch her presentation by making an application to the lives of the children. She first asked a little girl, "What would you have done?" She said, "Oh, I would have stayed and nursed him for a few days." The next little boy didn't want to be outdone, so he said, "And I would have brought him a box of candy." The teacher went around the class with her question, and finally came to a little girl who had a very distressed look on her face. The teacher said to her, "What would you have done?" She said, "I think I would have thrown up!" Believe me, the teacher had painted a gory picture, and that little girl was being honest.

I think God feels that way about our piosity. My friend, don't think you are being pious when you say, "Oh, I won't test God." God says, "Test Me. Try Me, and see if I am not good." I actually feel fatigued when I talk to some folk who say that they are just going to step out on "faith." Oh, my friend, wait until God puts a rock underneath you. Wait until God gives you definite leading before you make a fool of yourself and bring criticism upon the cause of Christ.

God says to this unbelieving king, "I'm not asking you to believe My message just because Isaiah said it. I want to put a foundation under it. I want to give you a supernatural sign so you will know that the message is from Me." But Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign. So God is going to give a sign -- not to Ahaz -- but to the whole house of David.

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [[Isa. 7:14](#)].

God puts a foundation under His prophecy; and, if you want to know whether or not the virgin birth is true, you can find out if you read the four Gospels. For example, in Matthew we read, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" ([Matt. 1:18-23](#)).

[Isaiah 7:14](#) has become one of the most controversial verses in Scripture because of the prophecy concerning the virgin birth. Unbelievers have quite naturally discounted it and have sought desperately, but in vain, for a loophole to reject the virgin birth. The battle has been waged about the meaning of the Hebrew word *almah*, which is translated "virgin."

The fact that the angel quotes this prophecy in [Isaiah 7:14](#) to Joseph as an explanation for Mary's being with child before her marriage to him is satisfactory evidence that the prophecy referred to an unmarried woman who had a son without physical contact with any man. The word used by Matthew (see [Matt. 1:23](#)) is the Greek word *parthenos*, which definitely means "virgin." The same Greek word was used for the Parthenon, the Greek temple to the goddess Athena, which the Greeks characterized as being a virgin.

When the Revised Standard Version of the Bible was first published, the Hebrew word *almah* was translated "young woman," with "virgin" in the footnotes -- of course, it should have been reversed. Their argument was that *almah* meant only a young woman. While it is true that there are places in the Scriptures where it is translated "young woman," it is evident that it means "virgin."

For example, when Abraham's servant went to Haran in search of a bride for Isaac and he prayed that God would direct him to the right girl, this is how Rebekah was described: "And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her . . ." ([Gen. 24:16](#)). The word damsel is the Hebrew word *naarah*, meaning "young woman," but that she was a virgin was made clear also. Then when the servant was rehearsing this experience of praying for God's guidance, he said, "Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water . . ." ([Gen. 24:43](#)), the Hebrew word *almah* is translated "virgin." I don't think that anyone could misunderstand what is being said here. When the word *almah* was used, it referred to a virgin young woman, that is, one who had had no sexual relationship with a man.

When the liberal theologian says that the Bible does not teach the virgin birth of Jesus, I feel like asking him if his papa had talked to him when he was a boy about the birds and the bees. He can deny that he believes in the virgin birth of Jesus, but he cannot deny that Isaiah and Matthew are talking about the virgin birth of Jesus.

Notice again Isaiah's prophecy: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah said that His name would be Immanuel, but you cannot find any place in the Gospels where He is called by that name. Immanuel means "God with us." They called Him "Jesus" because He would save His people from their sins. But, friend, He cannot save the people from their sins unless He is Immanuel, "God with us." Every time you call Him Jesus, you are saying, "God with us." He is God. He is God with us and God for us. He is our Savior, born of a virgin. Have you put your trust in Him?

When Isaiah gave this prophecy in [Isa. 7:14](#), someone probably came to him and said, "When will this take place?" I have a notion that Isaiah looked down through the centuries and said, "It will be a long time." Then how would the people of his generation know the prediction was true? The virgin birth of Christ would come to pass, just as Isaiah said it would, because God had spoken through Isaiah on many other things that

were fulfilled during the days in which he spoke them. One of them was his prophecy about Hezekiah and the Assyrians, which we shall see in the historic section of Isaiah. The Assyrians once gathered outside the walls of Jerusalem, and they were 150,000 strong. Things looked bad for Jerusalem. It looked as if the city would fall. So Hezekiah went into the temple, got down on his knees, and fell on his face before God. He cried out for deliverance, and God sent Isaiah to him with a message. Isaiah told Hezekiah that he didn't have to worry. The Assyrians would not come into the city, nor would they take it. In fact, Isaiah told the king that not even one arrow would be shot into Jerusalem. There were 150,000 soldiers outside the walls of Jerusalem, and each soldier had a quiver full of arrows on his back and a bow in his hand. You would think that out of that many soldiers there would be one that was trigger-happy, one who would shoot an arrow over the wall just to see if anyone would yell. If just one soldier had shot one arrow over the wall into the city, Isaiah would have rightly been declared a false prophet. But no arrows were shot; the city was spared. What Isaiah had told Hezekiah came true. And the New Testament bears witness to the fact that the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus came to pass exactly as Isaiah had predicted.

Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil,
and choose the good [[Isa. 7:15](#)].

Jesus was reared as a poor peasant in Palestine. This food was the simple diet of the poor.

For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the
good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her
kings [[Isa. 7:16](#)].

This verse would be fulfilled by the time the Messiah came. This seemed unlikely in Ahaz' day.

Chapter 8

THEME: The birth of the prophet's second son as a sign; prediction of Assyria's invasion of Immanuel's land

Chapters 7 -- 12 constitute a series of prophecies given during the reign of Ahaz. Some have attempted to identify the virgin's Son of chapter 7 with the prophet's son in chapter 8. The names preclude that possibility, and the additional information in chapter 9 makes it an impossibility for the two to be identical. The prophet's son is a sign (see [v. 18](#)).

This chapter is rather significant as it contains the prediction of the invasion of Immanuel's land by the king of Assyria. God had kept the flood tide of foreign invasions walled off from His people for over five hundred years. Now He opens the floodgates and permits an enemy to cover the land like a flood. The people are looking to a confederacy rather than looking to God for help.

This chapter concludes with a warning against spiritualism as the last resort of people who have rejected God's counsel and turned in desperation to the satanic world. The end will be trouble, darkness, and anguish.

The Birth Of The Prophet's Second Son As A Sign (8:1-8)

Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz [[Isa. 8:1](#)].

If you thought Shear-jashub was a strange name for a boy, try this one on for size! Maher-shalal-hash-baz is a remarkable name for a boy in any language. How would you like to carry this cognomen through life? That's what Isaiah's son had to do. I don't know what his nickname was. They may have shortened his name to Maher, or Hash, or even Baz. There is a reason, however, why God wants Isaiah to give his sons these unusual names. The reason is found in [verse 18](#) which says, "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." Both sons are signs, and their names carry a message.

Maher-shalal-hash-baz means "hasten booty, speed prey." This simply means that God is against those who are against His people. Paul put it like this: ". . . If God be for us, who can be against us?" ([Rom. 8:31](#)).

This boy's name is also a message for Ahaz, the man on the throne. He is a godless man, and God is trying to reach him. He tells Isaiah to get a great tablet and write on it with a "man's pen" -- or, the stylus of a frail, mortal man. He is then to hang it up in a prominent place like a billboard so that everyone can read it. God wants this boy's name written down so that the most humble person in the kingdom will see it, read it, and understand it. God is trying to reach Ahaz, first through Isaiah's first son, Shear-jashub ("a remnant shall return"), and then through Maher-shalal-hash-baz ("hasten booty, speed prey"). This second son's name is to assure Ahaz that God will take care of the enemies of His people.

And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah [[Isa. 8:2](#)].

Uriah means "Jehovah is my light." Zechariah means "Jehovah remembers." Jeberechiah means "Jehovah will bless." This is an interesting combination, is it not? Thus, the one witness says by his name, "Jehovah is my light," and the other says, "Jehovah's purpose is to bless." The offspring of these is the grace of God -- that is, he will never forget His people.

In all of Isaiah's actions there is a message for the people. He is acting out and writing out his message so that the people will understand it. The Book of Isaiah is a picture parable. Our Lord used this method also. The reason is that people will look at a picture. It is somewhat like television. It is amazing how many of us will sit in front of the television screen and watch things from that idiot box which under different circumstances we wouldn't waste our time on. Because God knows the inclination of mankind, He tries to get a message across to these people by using a picture.

And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz [[Isa. 8:3](#)].

"The prophetess" in this verse is Isaiah's wife, Mrs. Isaiah. She conceives and bears a son, and the child's name is given to him before he is born.

For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria [[Isa. 8:4](#)].

Before this child is able to say "Mommy" and "Daddy," the Assyrians will invade Syria and Samaria. The enemy in the north that is planning to come against Judah is going to be taken away into captivity. It will not be due to the brilliant military ability of Ahaz to work out a strategy that will bring victory. The victory will be due to the sovereign grace of God -- God is making this perfectly clear.

The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,

Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;

Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks [[Isa. 8:5-7](#)].

This is another remarkable passage of Scripture. The people "refuseth the waters of Shiloah," which means "sent." They refuse the peace God offered them, a peace here typified by this gentle, rippling brook. In contrast, we see in [verse 7](#) "the waters of the river, strong and many." This is evidently the Euphrates River where Assyria was located. These waters came down like a flood. In other words, the flood waters of the Euphrates represent the judgment of God and are contrasted with the gentle waters of Shiloah. God is giving a message to His people through these two rivers. As Shakespeare put it in his play As You Like It, there are "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Shiloah is a softly flowing little spring. It doesn't amount to much today, but it did in Isaiah's day. It flows between Mount Zion and Mount Moriah. There is a message in that little stream, a message that you will hear if you have a blood-tipped ear. It is a message sweeter than the rippling music of the stream itself. It is the story of grace, of Mount Zion, which stands in contrast to Mount Sinai, which is symbolic of the Mosaic Law. Moriah is where Abraham offered his son, where David bought the threshing floor of Araunah, and where Solomon put up the temple. And down at the end of that great shaft of rocks is Golgotha, where Christ was crucified. This speaks of grace. Moriah is where God provided Himself a Lamb. He spared Abraham's son, but He did not spare His own Son.

So here God is speaking grace to this man, Ahaz. He is saying to him, "I'll spare you, if only you will turn to Me."

And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel [[Isa. 8:8](#)].

God will permit Assyrians to overflow the land of Judah, but He will never permit them to take Jerusalem.

Pronouncement Against A Confederacy As A Substitute For God (8:9-14)

Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces [[Isa. 8:9](#)].

This is a warning against nations who form an alliance against God's land. Beginning with [Isaiah 13](#), we are going to have a series of messages to the nations that were contiguous to Israel, or at least had dealings with them in that day, and we will find the judgment of God will come upon them. That section which goes all the way from [Isaiah 13](#) to [Isaiah 35](#) is a most remarkable section in God's Word. Most of it is fulfilled prophecy. God says that the nations will never deter His purpose here on earth. It is interesting that the nations of the world no longer seek wisdom or counsel from God. God does have a purpose, and His purpose will prevail. If a nation goes in the other direction, judgment will come upon it.

Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.

For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid [[Isa. 8:10-12](#)].

Judah is not to be alarmed by the confederacy of Syria and Samaria. Fear had caused those in the north to unite, and God urges His people, "neither fear ye their fear." In other words, they are not to turn to an ally among the nations, which probably would have been Egypt. Later on they will ally themselves with Egypt, which brings great tragedy to the land.

Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem [[Isa. 8:13-14](#)].

They are to fear God above and look to Him. He will be either their salvation or a stone of stumbling. Cromwell was once asked why he was such a brave man. He had the reputation of being one of the bravest men who ever lived. He said, "I have learned that when you fear God, you have no man to fear." Paul said in [1Cor. 1:23](#), "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." The Lord Jesus said that either you will fall on this stone -- and He is that stone -- for salvation, rest upon Him who is the only foundation, and you will be saved; or He, the stone, will fall on you, judge you, and it will grind you to powder (see [Matt. 21:44](#)). You have two options: you can either accept Him or reject Him.

"Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself" is a strange injunction. Peter used this: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" ([1Pet. 3:15](#)). This is what God's people need to do. Today there is this light thinking about God, a lack of reverence for Him and for His Word. There are those who sometimes ridicule things that are sacred, make light of things that should not be made light of. You and I need to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, because there are multitudes of people today who are not convinced that ". . . the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" ([Hab. 2:20](#)). If they believed, my friend, that He is in your church on Sunday morning, they would not be at the beach, at some picnic area, or out mowing the back lawn. They would be with you in church. You and I haven't convinced them, have we?

Pronouncement Against Spiritualism As A Substitute For The Word Of God (8:19-22)

And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? [[Isa. 8:19](#)].

We are seeing a resurgence of spiritualism today. More than fifteen years ago I wrote, "God forbids His people to dabble in this satanic system. When a people turn from God, they generally go after the occult and abnormal" (see [Lev. 20:27](#); [Deut. 18:9-12](#)).

There is a great turning today to the occult, to the spirit world, and to demonology. There are churches of Satan in Southern California and in the San Francisco Bay area. The members worship the Devil; many are worshiping Satan today. Even Christians are dabbling in the occult. Many of them talk about casting out demons. My friend, I am not in that business. I preach the gospel of the grace of God and the Word of God. That will take care of all the demons. I say that we need to let the occult alone because it is dangerous, and it is growing by leaps and bounds. Some people don't believe there is any reality in it, but it is real, just as Satan is real. God warns us against it. Let us heed that warning.

And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.

And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness [[Isa. 8:21-22](#)].

These final verses reveal the final issue of pursuing a life of disobedience which will lead you into spiritualism. The result is dimness, darkness, and despair. Disobedience will take you there every time.

Chapter 9

THEME: Prophecy of the Child coming to David's throne and the dark days attending His first coming and preceding His second coming

This chapter is one with which Christians are generally familiar because of the prophecy concerning the coming Child, who is Christ. Handel's use of this chapter in *The Messiah* has added to the familiarity of the church with this particular passage. I am always thrilled when I listen to a presentation of Handel's work, especially when they sing, "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

The material presented in [Isaiah 7](#) -- [Isaiah 12](#) contains prophecies that Isaiah made during the reign of Ahaz. Ahaz was the one bad king that reigned during the period in which Isaiah prophesied. Isaiah began to prophesy at the death of Uzziah, who reigned for fifty-two years and was a good king. The next king was Jotham, Uzziah's son, who was also a good king. The next king was Ahaz, the grandson of Uzziah and the son of Jotham, who was a bad king and a phony besides. It was during the reign of Ahaz that Isaiah made these prophecies concerning the Messiah. It was a dark period in the history of the nation.

The Hope Of Israel (9:1-7)

In [verses 1-7](#) we find that the hope of Israel is in the Divine Child in both His first and second comings.

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation,
when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the
land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by
the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations [[Isa. 9:1](#)].

The translation of this verse is not established. Actually, contrary meanings are suggested. This poses no problem to the reverent mind but reveals a divine purpose in permitting both to be possible.

"And afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations." Others have translated it: "But in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations." It is difficult to see how both translations, "more grievously afflict" and "made it glorious," can be sustained, but I believe it is enigmatic for a reason. The first translation would refer to the near fulfillment when God did afflict the northeastern portion of the land comparatively lightly in the invasions of the Syrians and later brought heavier suffering upon them in the carrying away of the people into captivity by the Assyrians (see [2Kings 15:29](#)).

But the other translation, "hath he made it glorious," refers to the far fulfillment in the first coming of Christ. He did "make glorious" that area. Galilee was the despised area because it was a place where Gentiles had congregated. The Lord Jesus passed by Jerusalem, the snobbish religious center of the day. Jesus was neither born nor reared in Jerusalem. Nazareth was His hometown; and, when Nazareth rejected Him, He went down to Capernaum, which is on the Sea of Galilee in the despised periphery of the kingdom. Zebulun and Naphtali were located in the north, with Naphtali along the west bank of the Sea of Galilee and Zebulun adjoining Naphtali on the west. Nazareth was in Zebulun, and Capernaum (Jesus' headquarters) was in Naphtali. As far as I can tell, the Lord Jesus never changed His headquarters from Capernaum. In fact, that explains why

He pronounced such a severe judgment upon Capernaum -- it had access to light as no other place had.

[Matthew 4:12-16](#) tells us, "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." You will note that Matthew omitted the questionable clause. Otherwise, we would have the Holy Spirit's own interpretation of the passage. I believe that the double meaning is intended by the Holy Spirit. Both are surely true.

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined [[Isa. 9:2](#)].

Regardless of the way [verse 1](#) is translated or interpreted, it is obvious that the people in despised Galilee were in the darkness of paganism and religious tradition. That is one place where the Old Testament and paganism from the outside mingled and mixed. When the Lord Jesus began His ministry in that area, the people did see a great light. They saw the Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" ([John 8:12](#)). This was fulfilled at the first coming of Christ. I think it is safe to say that the first two verses refer to our Lord's first coming.

But to what period do the following verses refer? It is the belief of certain outstanding Bible expositors, among whom are Dr. F. C. Jennings and Dr. H. A. Ironside, that there is a hiatus, an interval, between [verses 2](#) and 3, so that while the first two verses refer to Christ's first coming, [verse 3](#) refers to His second coming, as we shall see.

Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil [[Isa. 9:3](#)].

The nation had been greatly multiplied and the people were more religious, but the joy was gone. They had a lot of religion, but they never had Christ. It was a period of great manifestation but no real joy.

The hiatus between [verses 2](#) and 3 has already been two thousand years long. Why didn't Isaiah give any prophecy about this period? Because during this interval God is calling out the church which was unknown to Isaiah. In [Romans 16:25-26](#) Paul says, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Paul makes it very clear that the prophets passed over that which they did not see, as Isaiah does in the chapter before us. In [Isaiah 63](#) we will come to a place where, with just a comma, Isaiah passes over a period of time that is already two thousand years long. The people in Isaiah's day had no revelation concerning the church, but today the church

has been revealed and the interval is filled in. This makes it clear that the rest of this chapter refers to the nation Israel, and the nation that was "multiplied" was the nation over which Ahaz was king. Notice that Paul says it was "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." So, you see, the revelation of the church was for a different congregation. Isaiah was speaking only to one nation, his own nation of Israel.

For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian [[Isa. 9:4](#)].

When will the burden be broken? It will be broken when Christ comes again. Why is it that Israel today cannot enjoy peace? Why are they plagued along every border? They are having all this trouble because they rejected the only One who can bring peace, their own Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The power of the oppressor will not be broken until the Lord comes the second time.

For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire [[Isa. 9:5](#)].

What a sad thing it was when those fine young Jewish athletes were killed during the Olympic Games in Munich a few years ago. They were murdered by terrorists; and, when their bodies were sent back to Israel, their loved ones and the whole nation mourned. What is in back of all this? Israel has a Messiah whom they have rejected. He is the Prince of Peace, and He is the only One who can bring peace to this troubled and persecuted people.

While these verses complete the thought of [verse 3](#), they also look beyond the immediate time to the Great Tribulation period which is coming in the future.

Now we see the prediction of their Messiah's coming:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this [[Isa. 9:6-7](#)].

How will this come about? "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." Is this a reference to the first coming of Christ? Most Christians seem to think it is, because they quote it at Christmastime. However, I feel sure that it refers to the second coming of Christ when He will be "born" to the nation of Israel. This is a complete prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming, as [Isaiah 53](#) is of His first coming. These verses continue the thought which we picked up in [verse 3](#), and they look forward to the second coming of Christ.

The question arises of how "a child is born" at His second coming. First of all, let me clearly state that He was not born "unto us," the nation Israel, at His first coming. They didn't receive Him. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" ([John 1:11](#)). Although He was born at Bethlehem the first time, He was not received by the nation -- only a few shepherds welcomed Him. The wise men who came to worship Him were Gentiles from a foreign land. If you read [verse 6](#) carefully, you will see that it was not fulfilled at His first coming, nor were [Isa. 9:3](#), [5](#) and [Isa. 9:7](#).

To say that Christ will be born to the nation Israel might be better stated. Actually, Israel will be born as a nation "at once," which is made perfectly clear in the final chapter of Isaiah: "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed [that is the Great Tribulation], she brought forth her children" ([Isa. 66:7-8](#)).

Israel is to be "delivered of a man child" in the future, not by His birth, but by Israel's birth. This will be the new birth of the nation Israel when Christ comes again. Israel will be born at the second coming of Christ.

I see no objection to calling attention to the fact that the child is born -- that is, His humanity. The son is given, which will be true at His second coming. In other words, it will be the same Jesus who was here nearly two thousand years ago.

"The government shall be upon his shoulder." The shoulder speaks of strength. The government of this world will be placed on His strong shoulders at His second coming; it was not at His first coming.

Notice the names that are given to our Lord:

"Wonderful" -- this is not an adjective; this is His name. In [Judges 13:18](#) we see the preincarnate Christ appearing as the Captain of the hosts of the Lord: "And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?" "Secret" in this verse is the same word as is translated "Wonderful." In [Matthew 11:27](#) the Lord Jesus said, ". . . no man knoweth the Son, but the Father. . . ." The people did not know it, but He was Wonderful, and people still don't know it today. There are Christians who have trusted Him as Savior but really don't know how wonderful He is.

He is going to put down rebellion when He comes to earth the second time, and He is going to reign on earth. His name is "Wonderful!"

"Counsellor" -- He never sought the counsel of man, and He never asked for the advice of man. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" ([Rom. 11:34](#)). God has no counsellor. The Lord Jesus Christ never called His disciples together and said, "Now, fellows, what do you think I ought to do?" You don't read anything like that in Scripture. The Lord called them together and said, "This is what I am going to do, because this is My Father's will." And Christ has been made unto us wisdom (see [1Cor. 1:30](#)). Most of us are not very smart. We must go to Him for help.

"The mighty God" -- The Hebrew word for this name is El Gibbor. He is the One to whom "all power is given." He is the omnipotent God. That little baby lying helpless on

Mary's bosom held the universe together. He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." He is the Mighty God!

"The everlasting Father" -- Avi-ad, Father of eternity. This simply means that He is the Creator of all things, even time, the ages, and the far-off purpose of all things. As John said, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" ([John 1:3](#)). In [Colossians 1:16](#) Paul said, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." Then in [Hebrews 1:1-2](#) we read, "God. . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds [ages]." The translation of the Greek word *aion* should be "ages" instead of "worlds," and that is the thought in this title of His -- Father of eternity.

"The Prince of Peace" -- Sar-Shalohim. There can be no peace on this earth until He is reigning. His government is not static; there is increase and growth. No two days are going to be alike when Jesus is reigning. He is going to occupy the throne of David. This is a literal throne which He will occupy at His second coming. Justice will be dominant in His rule. God's zeal, not man's zany plans, will accomplish this.

The Help Of Israel (9:1-7)

The remainder of the chapter, [verses 8](#) -- 21, covers the local situation in Isaiah's day and will be partially fulfilled in the immediate future, but it also looks forward to the time of the Great Tribulation for a full and final fulfillment. God will continue to punish this nation and all nations that have turned their backs on Him, until He comes again. Modern men don't like to hear this -- they would rather listen to something comforting. Check your history books and see what happened to Israel and other nations who left God out. They have had a sad, sordid story, and I am afraid that you and I live in a nation that is getting ripe for judgment. If we escape, we will be the only nation in the history of the world that has escaped.

Chapter 10

THEME: Judgment of Assyria after she executes God's judgment on Israel; the Great Tribulation and Battle of Armageddon

Once again I would like to remind you that this is a series of prophecies which began with chapter 7 and goes through chapter 12. They are prophecies which were given during the reign of Ahaz, a wicked king. On a black background Isaiah gives his predictions, speaking into a local situation, but also he looks down through the ages of time to that day when God is going to set up His Kingdom here on earth.

This is another remarkable chapter in God's Word. Great principles and gigantic programs in God's dealings with men and nations are set forth. The chapter opens with a brief discussion on the courts of that day. The injustices of the courts of the nation are reflected in the culture of the people and the chastisement of God.

God will use the Assyrians, as we shall see, to judge His people. And Assyria is a symbol of the future "king of the north" who shall come up against Immanuel's land in the last days. This prophecy reaches beyond the immediate future of Isaiah's day and extends down to the last days of the nation Israel. Isaiah identifies the period by the designation, "in that day." The chapter concludes with the awesome picture of the approach of the enemy from the north to the Battle of Armageddon.

Unjust Judges Will Be Judged Of God (10:1-4)

Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed [[Isa. 10:1](#)].

"Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees" -- that is, hand down unrighteous decisions. They should represent justice, but they do not give justice. These first few verses may appear at first to be a discourse of Plato or one of the moralists. The one notable exception is that behind human justice is the justice of God. The judge and throne down here on earth are to reveal His justice and are answerable to Him.

To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless! [[Isa. 10:2](#)].

This verse is very much up to date. I think we are seeing the working out of this in our contemporary culture, because the courts are to hand down justice and mirror the justice of God, and they don't. Lawlessness abounds. People sink into degradation. The idea of freedom has been distorted. Every criminal who is arrested ought to be given a fair trial, but in order that my family and your family can walk the streets in peace, criminals will have to be punished. Many who are guilty of crimes are set free by a softhearted, softheaded judge. That judge is not giving justice to me and my family or to you and your family.

We hear a lot about justice today, and that is what I want. I want the criminal punished so that I can walk the streets in safety and so that I can live in my home in safety. In our land it is no longer safe for women to walk on the streets at night. It is not even safe for men in many places. What is the problem? The problem is in our courts -- that is where God puts His finger down. The courts are not administering justice.

Now God mentions the poor and the widows and the fatherless; they are the ones who need justice. One of the leading political analysts in this country recently stated on a telecast that every program that has been devised to help the poor has hurt the poor. What is wrong? The only One who will give justice to the poor is God. Judges are supposed to represent God on earth. Today many godless men are judges. They are in no position to judge at all until they recognize that they are representing God.

One of the wonderful things about the founders of our country was the way they believed. Although Thomas Jefferson, for example, was a free thinker, he had great respect for the Bible. He was not what we would call a Christian, but he held God's Word in high esteem and respected the statements made in it. We have gotten so far away from God and His Word that our courts and government don't even recognize Him. It is a farce to have a man put his hand on the Bible and take an oath in a court of law today, because most

judges do not believe it is the Word of God. The lawyers, the jury, and the men who are taking the oath probably do not believe it is God's Word. When you don't believe it, you might as well take an oath on a Sears and Roebuck catalog. Some of them may have more respect for that than they do for the Bible.

God is dealing with principles; and, until a judge represents God, he cannot represent the people. We have gotten so far from this concept that I am sure I sound like a square! And that's what I am.

And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation
which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and
where will ye leave your glory? [[Isa. 10:3](#)].

God is saying to the judges, "You are to represent Me, and the day is coming when I am going to judge you." I feel that every judge ought to recognize the fact that he is one day going to stand before God and give an account of how he has handled his responsibility here on earth. Judges in our day seem to have bleeding hearts; they want to show mercy to the poor criminal. Well, they should be meting out justice to both rich and poor. In the day of reckoning, the unjust judges will stand before the Just Judge.

Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they
shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away,
but his hand is stretched out still [[Isa. 10:4](#)].

This distortion of justice works itself out in all strata of society. It affects all men and brings about deterioration and degradation. Today we are at a new low as far as morals are concerned.

Judgment Of Assyria After She Executes God's Judgment On Israel (10:5-15)

Now we come to the key to the entire passage. Here God makes one of the strangest statements in the Bible, and it is too much for a great many folk. My friend, if you don't like it, take your objections to God, because He is the one who said it.

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is
mine indignation [[Isa. 10:5](#)].

This is the key verse of the entire passage, and it sheds light on the whole purpose of God, for this verse says He will use Assyria as a rod to chasten His people Israel. This is an amazing thing. Just as you take up a switch to paddle a little fellow who has done wrong, so God is using Assyria as a switch. He is using Assyria to discipline His people. The destruction which Assyria will wreak is what the hand of the Lord God will wreak. This is difficult for modern man to swallow.

I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the
people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and
to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the
streets [[Isa. 10:6](#)].

God goes so far as to say that He is responsible for sending Sennacherib, the Assyrian, against Israel and for sending the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity.

Assyria is a symbol of another kingdom in the north whom God will use in the last days. Many Bible expositors believe this verse has reference to the "beast" which will come out of the sea, mentioned in [Revelation 13](#), who would be the ruler in the Roman Empire. I prefer to be specific and think it is a reference to Russia. Have you noticed that every since World War II the Russians have won every diplomatic battle? They have won, and they have our country on the ropes today. I wonder if God may not be using them. You might say, "You don't mean that God would use godless Russia?" Well, He used godless Assyria to spank His people in Isaiah's day. God may be using Russia to humiliate us today, and she may have already done that. When we fought in Vietnam, we were not fighting the North Vietnamese; we were fighting Russia. It was a very nice, polite war, and it was embarrassing. It was tragic and horrible. Was God permitting our humiliation in an attempt to bring us to our senses? It didn't seem to work -- we have not turned to God.

Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.

For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings? [[Isa. 10:7-8](#)].

If you had asked the Assyrian if he was being used as a rod to chasten Israel, he would have laughed at you. If you had asked Russia's dictators if they knew they were rods in the Lord's hands, they would have given you a great ha-ha! They would think such talk was ridiculous. Neither did the Assyrian have any notion that he was prompted of God, nor would he admit it. The Assyrians were having great victories on every hand, and their pride blinded them to their true status. Because they were resting on their own strength and supremacy and were victorious everywhere they turned, they were like Little Jack Horner who sat in a corner, put his thumb in the pie, pulled out a plum, and said, "What a smart boy am I." There are some rulers of nations who are like Little Jack Horner today, but God overrules, though He may be using them to accomplish His purpose.

Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks [[Isa. 10:12](#)].

When God gets through using Assyria to punish His people, God will deal with the Assyrians and judge them. They do not escape, either; history is a testimony to the fact. God judged them. Isaiah shows that God controls and judges all the nations of the earth.

Now He asks a very pointed question:

Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood [[Isa. 10:15](#)].

Imagine an axe out in the woods. You are walking through the woods and hear something patting itself on the back and saying, "Look at this big tree I cut down." You walk over to the axe and find nothing but the axe. You say to the axe, "What do you mean, you cut down the tree?" The axe replies, "The tree is down, and I did it." You say that is silly. Somebody had to be using the axe, and that is exactly how it was with Assyria and other

nations of the world. God uses nations. That is the reason it is so important today for men in our nation to recognize God, men who look to God for leading and guidance. But we have a divided nation today. In fact, we are lots more divided than we will admit. We have this minority group, that minority group, and the other minority group. However, the real minority is God. Although He is in the minority, Martin Luther said, "One with God is a majority," and if you are with God, you are with the majority. We need to be sure that we are on God's side today, because He is running the universe. As a nation we are a Johnny-come-lately. A two hundred-year-old nation is a baby compared to many of the other nations in history, and we have just about had it. The Assyrians are only instruments in the hand of God.

The Great Tribulation And Preservation Of The Remnant (10:20-27)

Now we have a vision of the Jewish remnant during the Great Tribulation:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth [[Isa. 10:20](#)].

In this verse Isaiah begins to look beyond the immediate circumstances which concern the Assyrian to "that day." As we have seen, "that day" is the Day of the Lord, which begins with the Great Tribulation period.

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt [[Isa. 10:24](#)].

This is a word of comfort to Judah that she shall be spared from captivity by the Assyrians.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing [[Isa. 10:27](#)].

The Battle Of Armageddon (10:28-34)

Again Isaiah moves beyond, "in that day."

He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages: They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled.

Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee.

As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem [[Isa. 10:28-32](#)].

This is a remarkable section of prophecy. It gives certain geographical locations, all of them north of Jerusalem, and it shows the route taken by Assyria and of the future invader from the north, who I think will be Russia. The invader comes from the land of Magog (see [Ezek. 38](#) -- [Ezek. 39](#)).

Now notice the places mentioned: "Aiath" is about fifteen miles north of Jerusalem. "Migron" is south of Aiath and is the pass where Jonathan got a victory over the Philistines (see [1Sam. 14](#)). I understand that General Allenby secured a victory over Turkey in the same place. "Geba" and "Ramah" are about six miles north of Jerusalem. "Anathoth" was about three miles north of Jerusalem. This is the home of the prophet Jeremiah. "Laish" is in the extreme north of Palestine, in the tribe of Dan. "Madmenah" (dunghill) is a garbage dump north of Jerusalem. "Gebim" is probably north of Jerusalem. The exact site is not known. "Nob" is the last place mentioned, and it is north of the city and in sight of Jerusalem.

This passage clearly charts the march of the enemy from the north, which brings a state of paralysis and defeat to Jerusalem.

Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled [[Isa. 10:33](#)].

God intervenes and delivers His people. I believe this is a reference to the second coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom.

And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one [[Isa. 10:34](#)].

I believe the "mighty one" is Christ when He comes to the earth.

Chapter 11

THEME: The Person and power of the King; the purpose and program of the Kingdom

Chapter 11 is a continuation of the prophecy begun in chapter 7 which will conclude with chapter 12. There is progress and development through this section of prophecies which were all given during the reign of Ahaz. In the preceding chapters we have seen a time of judgment, a time that the Lord Jesus called the Great Tribulation period. Chapter 11 is one of the great messianic prophecies of Scripture. It speaks of the coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom and the type of program He will have. In chapter 12 we will have the culmination of this section where we will see the worship of the Lord in the Kingdom.

The Person And Power Of The King (11:1-2)

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots [[Isa. 11:1](#)].

It is interesting that it says "a rod out of the stem of Jesse." David is not mentioned; the one who is mentioned is David's father. Of course that means He is in the line of David, but why does Isaiah go back to Jesse? Well, the royal line did begin with David. Jesse was a farmer, a shepherd who lived in a little out-of-the-way place called Bethlehem. But by the time of Jesus, the line of David had sunk back to the level of a peasant. It no longer belonged to a prince raised in a palace, but it belonged to One raised in a carpenter shop. Isaiah, therefore, very carefully says that the rod comes "out of the stem of Jesse."

Branch means "a live sprout." This is the second time we have had a reference to the "Branch." The first time it was mentioned was in [Isaiah 4:2](#). There are eighteen words in the Hebrew language translated by our English word branch. This is one of the titles given to the Lord Jesus Christ. In [Isaiah 53](#) He is "a root out of a dry ground." Delitzsch, the great Hebrew scholar, wrote, "In the historical fulfillment even the ring of the words of the prophecy is noted: the nehtzer (Branch) at first so humble, was a poor Nazarene" (see [Matt. 2:23](#)). Christ had a humble beginning, born yonder in Bethlehem, a city of David, but a city of Jesse also.

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD [[Isa. 11:2](#)].

This is the sevenfold spirit which rested upon the Lord Jesus Christ. The plentitude of power is the sevenfold spirit: (1) of the LORD; (2) of wisdom; (3) of understanding; (4) of counsel; (5) of might; (6) of knowledge; and (7) of the fear of the LORD. The number seven in Scripture does not necessarily mean perfection. The primary thought is fullness, completeness. [John 3:34](#) tells us, ". . . for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." In [Ephesians 5:18](#) we are admonished, ". . . be filled with the Spirit." Some of us just have a few drops at the bottom, others are one fourth filled, and some are half filled. Very few Christians you meet are really filled with the Spirit. A little girl once prayed, "Lord, fill me with the Spirit. I can't hold very much, but I can run over a whole lot." Very few Christians are just brimming full, running over on all sides. The Lord Jesus was the exception to that.

1. "The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him." The Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity went forth in the power of the Spirit. When He comes again, He is going to rule in the power of the Spirit.
2. "The spirit of wisdom." He has been made unto us wisdom ([1Cor. 1:30](#)). He is the only One who can lead and guide you and me through this life. We are no match for the world today. The Lord Jesus Christ could say ". . . for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" ([John 14:30](#)). Satan cannot find anything in Christ, but he can always find something in us. We need the Spirit of wisdom, and the Lord Jesus Christ is that Spirit of wisdom.
3. "And understanding," which means spiritual discernment. It is distressing to find that so few Christians have any discernment at all. I am amazed the way some people will follow a certain man purely on a human basis. They like his looks or the sound of his voice, and they never really comprehend what he is saying or if what he is saying is true to the Word of God. Christians need the Spirit of understanding. That is one thing for

which I have always prayed, and I seem to need it more today than ever before. We need to be aware of who is for the Lord and who isn't.

Not long ago, while driving a car in another city, I was listening to the radio. A man who was preaching blessed my heart, but he went on to say that if he did not get support he would no longer be able to broadcast. I said to myself, "You would think the people in this city would have enough spiritual discernment to support him." He is so much better than many who are being supported. I spoke to a pastor in that city about the man whom I had heard on the radio. He told me that he was a wonderful man, very humble, and a great Bible teacher, but he simply was not getting the support he needed. The Christians in that city need the spirit of understanding. My friend, have you ever prayed for the spirit of understanding? Ask God to give you the understanding that you lack.

4. "The spirit of counsel." All of us need counsel. Did you ever notice that the Lord Jesus Christ never asked anyone for advice? He never asked for counsel; He gave it.

5. "Might" -- that is, power. Oh, how we need power. Paul says, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection . . ." ([Phil. 3:10](#), italics mine). We need that today.

6-7. "The spirit of knowledge" and "of the fear of the LORD." I think these come through a study of the Word of God.

The Purpose Of The Kingdom (11:3-5)

And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked [[Isa. 11:3-4](#)].

"The wicked" should be "the wicked one." Satan will have his heyday on earth during the Great Tribulation. There will be no deliverance for the world at that time, humanly speaking. Even Israel will cry out, but help will not come from the north, the south, the east, or the west. Help will come from above. At that time the Messiah will come and establish His Kingdom. The reason for the Lord Jesus coming to earth is quite evident: this earth needs a ruler. The world has not voted for Him, and it would not vote for Him, but God has voted for Him. And since this is God's universe, God will establish Him on earth and He is going to judge -- not after the sight of His eyes. There won't be a lengthy court case where, in the end, the criminal is turned loose. The whole thing is rather terrifying: there will be two judgments, one for believers and one for unbelievers. At the beginning of the Tribulation believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Then 1,007 years later there will be the Great White Throne judgment for the lost.

One day I am going to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything that is phony in my life will be brought out in the open, and so I have been trying to get rid of that which is phony. I want things to be crystal clear, because someday the Lord is going to turn a light on my life and everything will be exposed. What a light that is going to be. It is rather terrifying.

And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins [[Isa. 11:5](#)].

The thing that will gird the Lord's reign will be righteousness and faithfulness. The purpose of the reign of Christ on this earth is to bring in a reign of righteousness and justice as well as to restore the dominion lost by Adam.

The Particulars Of The Kingdom (11:6-9)

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox [[Isa. 11:6-7](#)].

During the time when the Lord reigns on earth the calf and the young lion will lie down together. The only way they can lie down together today is if the calf is inside the lion!

"The lion shall eat straw like the ox." That seems ridiculous to us. Anybody knows that a lion does not eat straw. But a Bible teacher, who has a very sharp mind, once said, "I will tell you what I'll do. If you can make a lion, I will make him eat straw." The One who made the lion will be able to make him eat straw when the time comes.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea [[Isa. 11:9](#)].

This Kingdom shall extend over the entire earth.

The Program Of The Kingdom (11:10-16)

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious [[Isa. 11:10](#)].

The key to this verse is the phrase "in that day." "That day" begins with the Tribulation and extends on into the Kingdom. The Gentiles shall have a part in the millennial Kingdom.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea [[Isa. 11:11](#)].

God shall restore the nation Israel to the land. They were established the first time in the land when Moses led them out of Egypt, and Joshua brought them into the land.

And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth [[Isa. 11:12](#)].

What is the "ensign"? That ensign is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. It will not be some banner that will be lifted up, but He will be the rallying center for the meek of the earth in that day. That will be the day when the meek will inherit the earth. That is God's plan. That is His program, and He will bring it to pass.

And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt [[Isa. 11:16](#)].

A great super highway will extend from Assyria to Egypt over the great land bridge of Palestine. Apparently the nations of the world shall come over this to Jerusalem to worship (see [Zech. 14:16-18](#)).

Chapter 12

THEME: The worship of the Lord in the Millennium; the Kingdom Age

We have been following a series of prophecies beginning with chapter 7 and concluding with chapter 12. The series began with the judgment of God upon His people. In [Isaiah 11](#) we saw that the Kingdom would be established on earth and that the Lord Jesus would reign personally.

Here in chapter 12 we reach a high note. The Tribulation is past, and the storms of life are all over. Now Israel has entered the Kingdom, and we find them worshiping and singing praises to God. And we find Israel at the temple, not at the wailing wall. Israel is at the wailing wall today, which is one of the proofs that Israel's return to the land at the present time does not fulfill prophecy.

This brief chapter reads like a psalm -- for that is what it is. It is a jewel of beauty. Here is set before us the praise of a people under the direct and personal reign of Christ. It is pure praise from redeemed hearts to God because of His salvation and creation. The curse has been removed from the earth, which is an occasion for praise to God for His display of goodness in creation. You and I have not seen anything like this in nature because of the curse that rests upon it. Today nature has a sharp fang and a bloody claw. During the Kingdom Age that will change entirely.

Praise Of Jehovah For His Salvation (12:1-3)

And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me [[Isa. 12:1](#)].

Once again we have the expression "in that day," which marks the beginning of the Great Tribulation period and goes through the coming of the Kingdom that Christ is going to establish upon the earth.

This verse expresses the thought that the night of sin is over and the day of salvation is come. Israel has gone through the terrible night of the Tribulation, and now the light has come. The Tribulation is over, and they enter the peace and joy of the Kingdom. This is an occasion for praise! The thing that will characterize the Kingdom Age is pure joy.

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation [[Isa. 12:2](#)].

Note that they will not say that God provided salvation but that He is salvation. Salvation is a Person, not a program or a system or a ritual or a liturgy. Salvation is a Person, and that Person is the Lord Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ. They are praising Him for His salvation.

Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation [[Isa. 12:3](#)].

The "wells" speak of abundance. His salvation gives satisfaction and joy to the heart. During the Kingdom period there will be a time of great joy, which is what the Lord wants for His own. He wants us to be happy now. Our salvation should cause us to rejoice and sing praises to the Lord. I do not think we are ever witnesses to Him until we have that joy.

Praise Of Jehovah For His Creation (12:4-6)

And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted [[Isa. 12:4](#)].

"In that day," of course, refers to the Millennium, the light part of the day. The "Day of the Lord" opened with the night of sin. Our day begins with sunrise, but the day in the Old Testament began with sundown. ". . . Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" ([Ps. 30:5](#)). The time of the Millennium is the morning of joy and the time of thanksgiving to God for salvation -- but not only that, it is to thank Him for the fact that He is the Creator. His mighty and expansive "doings" are to be declared among the people and His name exalted. The "doings" of God include not only His work in creation, but everything He does.

"In that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD" -- hallelujah is the word.

Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth [[Isa. 12:5](#)].

God has done great things. When the six days of renovation and creation came to an end, God looked upon His work and said that it was good. When God says it is good, it is good! I think it would be well for us to thank Him for a perfect salvation and thank Him for creation, even though sin has marred it. In my backyard I notice that the gophers have been burrowing under the fence, and ants get into the house, but in spite of these annoyances there is the singing of the birds and the beauty of the flowers and trees. Even though the earth has been cursed with sin, it is still beautiful. Just think how beautiful it will be when the curse is removed. We will have an occasion to sing praises to God in that day as well as today.

Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee [[Isa. 12:6](#)].

This is one great throbbing and pulsating outburst of a redeemed soul who is giving to God all that a poor creature can -- his hallelujah! We talk of our dedication to God, but we don't even know what dedication means. In that glorious day Israel will know its meaning, and we will too.

Chapter 13

THEME: Destruction in the Day of the Lord and in the immediate future

Chapter 13 brings us to an altogether different section. The tone changes immediately. Chapters 13 -- 23 contain "burdens" imposed on nine surrounding nations. A burden is something that you bear, and these burdens are judgments of God upon these nine nations. You could substitute the word judgment for "burden" and it would be just as accurate. This is a remarkable passage of Scripture, because most of the prophetic judgments have already been fulfilled. They are now facts of history. Each of these nations had some contact with Israel, and most of them were contiguous to her borders or not very far away. Israel suffered at the hands of some of them -- and is suffering today -- and will suffer again in the future.

You will find some names in this chapter that are strangely familiar. Egypt is one of them. While some of these judgments will take place in the future, the chief characteristic of this section is that much has been fulfilled and stands today as an evidence of fulfilled prophecy. All of this adds singular interest and importance to these eleven chapters. In this section the Assyrian is no longer the oppressor; another set of nations headed by Babylon takes his place.

It was not pleasant to the prophet to deliver this type of message. This was not the way to win friends and influence people. But God's prophets were not in a popularity contest.

Babylon is the subject of the first burden. It is suggestive of many things to the reverent student of Scripture. First of all, the literal city of Babylon is the primary consideration. This is indeed remarkable, as Babylon in Isaiah's day was an insignificant place. It was not until a century later that Babylon became a world power. God pronounced judgment upon Babylon before it became a nation!

This section does not end with the "burdens" on nine surrounding nations but extends through six woes in chapters 28 -- 33 and concludes with the calm and blessing after the storm in chapters 34 and 35. These last two chapters again give us a millennial picture.

In chapter 13 we will see the punishment of Babylon in the Day of the Lord. I believe this looks forward to the Great Tribulation period for its final fulfillment.

Punishment Of Babylon In The Day Of The Lord (13:1-12)

The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see [[Isa. 13:1](#)].

The literal city of Babylon in history is in view in this chapter and also in chapter 14. It became one of the great cities of the ancient world. In fact, it became the first great world

power and is so recognized in Daniel's prophecy. Nebuchadnezzar was the "head of gold" of Babylon. He was the king of the first great world power.

The city of Babylon will be rebuilt in the future. Babylon is the symbol of united rebellion against God, which began at the Tower of Babel and will end in [Revelation 17-18](#) where we will see religious Babylon and political Babylon ruling the world. During the Great Tribulation period Babylon will go down by a great judgment from God. This possibly is the first mention of it in Scripture.

I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness [[Isa. 13:3](#)].

In this verse the word sanctified means "set apart for a specific use by some agency." God says, "I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger." God has "sanctified" or raised up Babylon for a specific purpose. He did the same thing with Assyria. In [Isaiah 10:5](#) God said through the prophet Isaiah, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation." God used Assyria to punish His people, and then He judged Assyria. This is what He is going to do with Babylon. Anything can be sanctified if it is set apart for God. Assyria and Babylon were set aside to punish Israel. They were instruments in His hands for a specific purpose.

The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle [[Isa. 13:4](#)].

This verse explains what we mean by "sanctified ones." Babylon will come against the southern kingdom of Judah (as Assyria did against the ten northern tribes of Israel) and take it into captivity.

They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land [[Isa. 13:5](#)].

The Babylonians will be the "weapons of his indignation."

Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty [[Isa. 13:6](#)].

This prophecy looks beyond anything that now is in history and projects into the Great Tribulation.

Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:

And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it [[Isa. 13:7-9](#)].

During the Great Tribulation God will again use the power (called Babylon here) to judge these people, just as He did in the past. The Tribulation is spoken of as a time of travail, with men in travail. The Day of the Lord opens with this time of travail.

Now this identifies it as the Great Tribulation:

For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine [[Isa. 13:10](#)].

This is prophesied again by the Lord Jesus in [Matthew 24:29](#): "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." [Revelation 8:12](#) tells us, "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible [[Isa. 13:11](#)].

"I will punish the world for their evil" -- We are living in a world today that is moving toward judgment.

I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir [[Isa. 13:12](#)].

When Christ died for you and me on the cross, that added value to us.

[Verses 13-16](#) go on to tell us that the Tribulation will be a time of worldwide destruction when no "flesh would survive" except for the fact that God will preserve a remnant for Himself.

Destruction Of Babylon In The Day Of Man (13:17-22)

Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it [[Isa. 13:17](#)].

Who are the Medes? Media and Persia became a dual nation and a mighty empire that conquered Babylon. Isaiah is speaking of that which was going to take place in the immediate future. He identifies those who will destroy Babylon: "the Medes."

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah [[Isa. 13:19](#)].

This prophecy has been fulfilled. Babylon was the greatest kingdom that has ever existed upon this earth. The Macedonian Empire was great; the Egyptian Empire was great, as was the Roman Empire. At one time Great Britain could have been named a great nation, but I don't think anything can compare to the glory of Babylon. God's Word calls it "the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," and that excellency God overthrew as He did Sodom

and Gomorrah. All you have to do is to look at the ruins of ancient Babylon to recognize that that has happened.

It was a great city that was never rebuilt. Other great cities have been rebuilt. This is especially true of Jerusalem. Rome was destroyed and rebuilt. Cities in Germany were bombed out -- absolutely obliterated -- and were rebuilt. Frankfurt, Germany, was leveled, and it arose out of the ashes a great city. But Babylon did not arise. God said that it would never again be inhabited. It is true that Babylon will be rebuilt in the future, but not on the ancient site of Babylon. It will be built in a different place.

Babylon represents confusion, and the future Babylon will be a great commercial center, a great religious center, a great political center, a power center, and the educational center of the world again.

It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there [[Isa. 13:20](#)].

How can Babylon be destroyed and yet appear in the last days as a literal city again? Already the ancient site of the ancient Babylon is seven to nine miles from the Euphrates River. The river ran in a canal right through the ancient city of Babylon. The ancient site will never be rebuilt, but Babylon will be rebuilt on another site. The ruins of ancient Babylon stand as a monument to the accuracy of fulfilled prophecy.

Several archaeologists of the past who have excavated Babylon say that they were never able to get the Arabians to stay in the camp beside the ruins. The Arabians would always go outside the area and stay. They were superstitious. It is interesting that God said they would not pitch their tents in Babylon.

But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged [[Isa. 13:21-22](#)].

"Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there." Lions have been found making their homes amid the ruins.

"Satyrs shall dance there." Satyrs are demons. Satyrs shall dance in Babylon. If you want to go to the dance of the demons, Babylon is the place to go. I hear of folk here in Southern California who worship Satan. One young fellow who claims to belong to a church that worships Satan came to me after a meeting and attacked me in a very vitriolic manner. He insisted that demons are real, and he worshiped them. I agreed that demons are real, but I cautioned him about worshipping them. Then I asked him if he had ever danced with the demons. He looked at me with amazement and said, "No!" So I told him where their dance hall is. I told him that demons dance in the ruins of Babylon. I said to him facetiously, "Why don't you go over there? Brother, if you are going to go halfway,

go all the way." Babylon was the headquarters for idolatry in the ancient world. Apparently demons have this spot as a rallying place.

The future Babylon will become a great center on earth. The Man of Sin, the willful king, called the Antichrist, will reign in that place. It will be destroyed just as the ancient Babylon was destroyed. Babylon is a memorial to the fact of the accuracy of fulfilled prophecy and a testimony to the fact that God will also judge the future Babylon.

Chapter 14

THEME: The millennial Kingdom established after the final destruction of Babylon; the origin of evil and its judgment; and the burden of Palestine

This chapter is a continuation of the burden of Babylon begun in chapter 13. The burden of Babylon is actually a judgment on Babylon. Babylon was the first of several nations upon which the judgment of God was to fall. All of the nations to be judged had something to do with Israel -- either by physical proximity or political involvement. Great issues are at stake in chapter 14. The origin of evil and its judgment and final removal from this earth is the theme of this section.

Local situations and nations are the expression of these worldwide themes and eternal issues. This chapter looks at nations and the problems of life through the telescope rather than placing them under the microscope for inspection.

This chapter opens on a joyful note because of the final judgment of Babylon. The millennial Kingdom is established with all fears and dangers removed. No enemy of God is abroad. The judgment here and elsewhere in this Book of Isaiah is explained. We will see here God's plan and purpose for the earth.

This chapter is a mixture of light and darkness. The chapter changes from the ecstasy of the Kingdom to the punishment of hell. Satan and the problem of evil are brought before us. There is an extended section on the final destruction of Babylon. This chapter of great subjects and strong contrasts closes with the insertion of the burden of Palestine, which was probably brought about by the sudden demise of King Ahaz (see [2Kings 16:19-20](#)).

The Future Restoration Of Israel And The Peace Of The Kingdom (14:1-8)

For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel,
and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined
with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob [[Isa. 14:1](#)].

This verse reaches down to the end times. God has said again and again that the nation Israel will be restored to her land. Now I do not think you see fulfillment of the prophecies there today. When God restores them to the land, Israel will not have any problems with other nations. They won't need to turn to Russia or the United States or to the United Nations for help. The Lord Jesus will reign there.

There are many people who say they believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, but they will turn right around and say that this passage is not literal. When

you deny its reality and the fact that it is literal, you deny the inspiration of Scripture. "For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel" -- He has said that too many times for anyone to say, "I didn't quite get it," or, "It means something else."

And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors [[Isa. 14:2](#)].

My friend, this has not yet been fulfilled. "The people" in this verse are Gentiles. The Gentiles are going to return them to Palestine. But the Gentiles up to this point have actually hindered them. Even Great Britain, when they had a mandate in the land, would not let the Jews return after World War II. But the Jews went in anyway, because they had to go somewhere. How the multitudes went to that land is a real saga of suffering. As I write, Russia is hindering the Jews from returning to Palestine. Other nations are not concerned for them either. Now the Jews throughout the world are interested in helping their brethren return to the land, but Gentiles are not helping them. I take it, therefore, that we are not seeing the fulfillment of Scripture.

And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve [[Isa. 14:3](#)].

The Jews have sorrow in that land today, and they are in fear. I walked through the streets of Jerusalem and through the streets of some other cities in Palestine some time ago, and there were soldiers everywhere. Why? The nation is fearful. Even if things were settled, they would still be in fear. There is no rest from sorrow for them.

That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! [[Isa. 14:4](#)].

I think "Babylon," in this passage, represents the great enemy in the last days who will be headquartered in Babylon. It represents all the enemies of Israel. Babylon was an inveterate hater of this nation.

The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers.

He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth [[Isa. 14:5-6](#)].

These verses speak of the final judgment at the end of the Great Tribulation period. Judgment has to take place. This earth must be judged. There is too much injustice here. Someone is going to have to handle the judgment, and I thank the Lord that it won't be me. I am thankful that we don't have to look to men in these matters. The Lord Jesus will do the judging.

The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.

Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon,
saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us
[[Isa. 14:7-8](#)].

What is described in this passage has not yet taken place. After the War of Armageddon and the coming of Christ, rest and peace come to the earth. Instead of sorrow there is singing. Weeping is only for the night. The morn of joy has come.

The Final Ruler Of The World Cast Into Sheol (14:9-11)

Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it
stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it
hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations [[Isa. 14:9](#)].

"Hell," in this verse, is Sheol. It can mean the grave or the place of torment. Evidently the latter meaning is in view here.

All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak
as we? art thou become like unto us?

Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols:
the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee [[Isa. 14:10-11](#)].

All the pomp and glory of man is removed.

The Origin Of Satan And Evil (14:12-17)

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the
nations! [[Isa. 14:12](#)].

"Lucifer" is none other than Satan. Lucifer, according to [Ezekiel 28](#), is the highest creature that God ever created. But he was a Judas Iscariot -- he turned on God. He set his will over God's will. In [Luke 10:18](#) the Lord Jesus says, ". . . I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." In [1John 3:8](#) we are told, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Then in [Revelation 12:7-9](#) we are told, "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." This is a picture of this creature Lucifer at the very beginning.

What was the sin of this creature created higher than any other? Well, what is sin in its final analysis? I'm not speaking philosophically, but theologically -- what is sin?

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will
exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the
mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most
High [[Isa. 14:13-14](#)].

These are the five "I wills" of Lucifer. He was setting his will over against the will of God. This is sin in embryo. This is the evolution of evil. There is no evolution of man, but there is evolution of sin. It began by a creature setting his will against the will of God. As a free moral agent, the creature must be allowed to do this. It is nonsense to talk about a creature who has a free moral will, who can do anything he wants to, but is restricted in his movements in a certain area. Lucifer had a free will.

This is man's original sin: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" ([Isa. 53:6](#)). Murder is sin, not just because God says it is, but because it is contrary to the will and character of God. Anything that is contrary to the character and will of God is sin, regardless of what it is. I think that some people can even displease God by going to church.

Imagine little bitty puffed-up creature man, who says to God, "I won't do what You want me to do. I am going to do it my way." That is exactly what man is saying today. Well, friend, you are not going to do things your way, because God's will is going to prevail in the final analysis. Therefore, the prayer of all God's people should be, ". . . Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" ([Matt. 6:10](#)). Anything contrary to His will is sin, regardless of what it is.

The sin of Satan was overweening pride. He did not go out and get drunk, and he didn't steal anything. He went against God's will. He was created as an angel of light; he was the "son of the morning," a perfect being. He was given a free moral will -- he could choose what he wanted. But he was lifted up -- so lifted up by pride that he set his will against the will of God. It wasn't the purpose of Satan to be different from God; he wanted to be like God. In other words, he wanted to be God. He put his will above the will of God, and any creature who does that puts himself in the place of God.

There are many men like Lucifer today. They put their wills above the will of God and take His place. That is what sin is all about in the human family. There are only two ways: God's way and man's way. That is what the Lord Jesus Christ meant when He said, ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" ([John 14:6](#)). My friend, you live in God's universe today. You breathe His air and enjoy His sunshine. He never sends you a bill for either one or for the life He furnishes. You are His creature. You owe Him a great deal. You are to obey Him.

In his natural state, man is unable to obey God; that is why we have to come to Him through the Lord Jesus Christ as lost sinners. Then we are given a new nature. That is what it means to be born again.

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? [[Isa. 14:15-17](#)].

God is yet going to judge Satan, and that judgment will be severe. Satan is finally going to be cast into the lake of fire which was prepared for him.

God is working out a great plan and purpose that is far beyond the thinking of anyone here on this earth. It is not for you and me to question it. Rather, we need to trust Him, because He is prepared to extend to us mercy, grace, and love.

The Future Rebellion Of Babylon (14:18-25)

All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house [[Isa. 14:18](#)].

Babylon was controlled by Satan. You remember that Satan offered to the Lord Jesus the kingdoms of this world (see [Luke 4:5-7](#)). Babylon belonged to him. Back of Babylon and all the kingdoms of this world is Satan. In the future, Babylon will evidently become the rallying point for all the nations which are against God.

For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD.

I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts [[Isa. 14:22-23](#)].

If you have ever seen pictures of the ruins of Babylon, you realize how literally these verses have been fulfilled. In the future, Babylon will be rebuilt (though at a different site). It will once again be a place of world rulership, and it will be a Tower of Babel lifted against God. And again God will come down to judge, and that will be the final judgment. The reason that these great truths have been given to us is so that we will know what is coming in the future.

The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders [[Isa. 14:24-25](#)].

"The Assyrian" represents the king that is coming from the north.

[Verses 19-27](#) give a detailed account of the coming judgment of Babylon and all that it represents. It has been only partially fulfilled in the past, but it has been fulfilled quite literally.

The Fierce Repudiation Of Palestine (14:28-29)

In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden [[Isa. 14:28](#)].

There is inserted at this point the burden of Palestine which was precipitated by the death of Ahaz. Ahaz had reigned for sixteen years and had been an evil king. The people felt he would be followed by an evil king, but they were delighted to be rid of him. There was a bare possibility that a good king might follow him -- and they did get one, by the way.

Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent [[Isa. 14:29](#)].

Two more good kings ruled after Ahaz, but the worst kings are yet to come. The people are to understand that just the rule of man will not bring about improvement in the world. In this country we seem to feel that if we change presidents or parties there is going to be an improvement. We have done that, and there has been no improvement. God tells Palestine not to rejoice just because Ahaz is dead. Things are not going to get any better at all.

Before the Kingdom blessings prevail, there will be a severe judgment of God upon that land. It will be more severe than that of the surrounding nations, because this nation had light, and light creates responsibility. Isaiah is looking into the future when there will be the Great Tribulation period and the Antichrist's rule.

There are those who do not feel that the burden mentioned here is much of a burden but it is called a burden, and it is about Palestina. The name Palestina is quite interesting. It refers to those who gave that name to the land, the Philistines. They had come up the coast of Egypt, and they slipped into the land. They were there when Israel arrived. Apparently the Philistines had not been in the land during the days of Abraham, because the Canaanites were then in the land. But when the children of Israel returned four hundred years later, the Philistines had come into the land. In the Books of Zephaniah and Zechariah are specific prophecies against Ashdod and Ashkelon, two Philistine cities. They were to be destroyed, and it was literally fulfilled. [Verses 30-32](#) describe the judgment in detail, and it is fierce!

CHAPTERS 15 AND 16

Chapter 15

THEME: The burden of Moab

This brief chapter records the third burden, the burden of Moab. Chapters 15 and 16 deal with Moab. This seems strange in light of the fact that there were only two chapters that dealt with Babylon, and Babylon was the first great world power. Compared to Babylon, Moab may seem to us like it was very small potatoes. But in Isaiah's day -- in fact, as early as the time of David -- this land was very important, and it was a great kingdom.

Moab was the nation which came from Lot through the incestuous relationship with his elder daughter. Moab, the illegitimate son of this sordid affair, was the father of the Moabites. These people became the inveterate and persistent enemies of the nation of Israel. Balak, their king, hired Balaam, the prophet, to curse Israel, for he feared them when they passed through the land of Moab.

The lovely story told in the Book of Ruth concerns a maid of Moab. This maiden of Moab was a very wonderful person. I am in love with Ruth and have been for a long time -- not only the Book of Ruth, but also with my wife whose name is Ruth. David was part

Moabite for his father Jesse was a descendant of Obed, the son of Boaz and Ruth. David had relatives in Moab, and he took his father and mother there when Saul was pursuing him.

Today the nation of Moab has disappeared, but who are the modern Moabites? I feel that Moab is representative of those who make a profession of being children of God but actually have no vital relationship with Him (see [Heb. 12:8](#)). Like Felix and Festus, the Moabites were "almost persuaded." They were not very far from the kingdom, but they never quite made it. They were neighbors of God's people but never became followers of God.

The modern "Moabite" is easily discovered. He is in our churches today. He parades as a Christian. He is the one Paul describes in [2Timothy 3:5](#): "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." [Jude 1:16](#) also describes him: "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." The modern Moabites are ungodly. They pretend to be godly, but they are not. They flatter you with great swelling words when they think they can get something from you, but drop you the minute they find that they cannot get anything from you.

Moab was a dangerous friend to have. It was never a trusted ally of Israel.

The Sudden Destruction Of Moab (15:1-3)

The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence [[Isa. 15:1](#)].

"In the night" -- the burden of Moab came suddenly. This expression is repeated twice to emphasize the suddenness of the storm which struck the nation. The storm came at night, and their night of weeping never ended. Assyria destroyed this nation in a way that is unbelievable and almost unspeakable. They seemed to wipe Moab off the face of the earth.

"Kir" is Kerak on a mountain peak about ten miles from the southeast corner of the Dead Sea.

He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off [[Isa. 15:2](#)].

There are several places mentioned in this verse with which I do not think we are acquainted. "Bajith" means house and apparently refers to the temple of Chemosh which was in that land. "Dibon" was a town on the east side of Jordan where the Moabite stone was found. "Nebo" is the mountain from which Moses saw the Promised Land. "Medeba" was a city that belonged to Reuben (see [Josh. 13:16](#)).

All of these cities and places belonged to Moab during Isaiah's day. They were going to be destroyed because, although the Moabites professed to know God, they spent their time in heathen temples dedicated to pagan gods, saying that they were worshiping the living and true God.

In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly [[Isa. 15:3](#)].

When I was in Amman, Jordan, I had a very funny feeling. It is a weird sort of place. It is a very poor land now, but in Isaiah's day it was a rich country. I felt as if the judgment of God was still on that place.

The Sympathy Of The Prophet For Zoar (15:5)

The judgment upon Moab was so serious that even Isaiah was moved:

My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction [[Isa. 15:5](#)].

Although Moab was the enemy of Israel, Isaiah's heart goes out to them in sympathy because of the terror that has come upon them. This reveals the heart of God. In spite of people's sin today, God still loves them and will extend His mercy to them if they will but turn to Him.

The rest of the chapter gives a detailed description of the further ravaging of the land of Moab. It has been literally fulfilled.

Chapter 16

The Final Overture Of Mercy Offered To Moab (16:1-5)

Chapter 16 opens with a last call to Moab to avail herself of the mercy of God which He has provided for her.

Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion [[Isa. 16:1](#)].

A lamb was to be sent from Moab to Israel for an offering on the altar there. The lamb was the animal of sacrifice which best depicts Christ, "... the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" ([John 1:29](#)). If they sent a lamb, Moab would signify that they recognized the God of Israel. They did not send a lamb. The Moabites wanted to be religious without acknowledging the fact that they were subject to a higher will and were sinners in the sight of God. This was their great sin.

For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon [[Isa. 16:2](#)].

I crossed that little river of Arnon. It is not much of a river, and it certainly could not separate the Moabites from the Assyrians. They were taken there.

And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness [[Isa. 16:5](#)].

In [Acts 15:16](#) James mentions that the "tabernacle of David" is "fallen down," but that after God has called out the Gentiles to form the church, He will turn again and rebuild the tabernacle of David. This is what Isaiah is talking about here.

The Fierce Pride Of Moab (16:6)

We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so [[Isa. 16:6](#)].

The reason that God had to reject and judge Moab was that their pride had led them to reject God's proffered offer of mercy. God would have delivered them, but instead they trusted in their own righteousness.

The Fulfillment Of Judgment Within Three Years (16:13-14)

This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.

But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble [[Isa. 16:13-14](#)].

When God deals with the nations that have to do with Israel, He uses a calendar. He never uses a calendar with the church. Within three years the Moabites were to be destroyed, and within three years God used Assyria to destroy this nation. It was the judgment of God upon them because of their pride.

Lucifer, the son of the morning, was also lifted up with pride. He wanted to lift his throne above the throne of God. He wanted to establish his own self-contained kingdom and be independent of God. Basically, this is the position of all liberal theology. Pride is the thing that causes people to reject God's Word and His revelation. Most people want a do-it-yourself religion. They want to do something to be saved, because it ministers to their pride. Many accuse church members of being hypocritical, selfish, and some actually anti-God. All this rests basically on the pride of the human heart: "we have turned every one to his own way" ([Isa. 53:6](#)).

Judgment came upon Moab. This out-of-the-way nation, entirely forgotten today, has had a message for us.

CHAPTERS 17 AND 18

Chapter 17

THEME: The burden of Damascus and Ephraim; the burden of the land beyond the rivers of Ethiopia

The Burden Of Damascus And Ephraim (17:1-10)

Damascus was the leading city of Syria, and it still is that today. Many have called it the oldest city in the world. There are, of course, several places that make the same claim. In Greece, the city of Mycenae claims to be the oldest, but there is not much there today except a very good Greek restaurant! By the Jordan there is a sign giving the kilometers to "Jericho, The World's Oldest City." I guess about every country in the world claims to have the oldest city. I have been waiting for my native state of Texas to make the same claim -- I am sure they will dig it up some day. However, Damascus does have a good

claim to it. It was Vitranga who wrote, "Damascus has been destroyed oftener than any other town . . . it rises again from ashes." But "Damascus" in this chapter refers to the entire nation of Syria.

Ephraim is the name of a tribe of Israel, it is the name of a city, it is the name of a mountain, and it is the name of a man. Ephraim is often used in Scripture to refer to the ten northern tribes of Israel. The prophets used it in that way: "For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer. . . . Ephraim is joined to idols . . ." ([Hos. 4:16-17](#)).

Therefore, we have here in chapter 17 the burden of Damascus and Ephraim or, in other words, the burden of the nations of Syria and Israel. Because of the confederacy between Syria and Israel (often for the purpose of coming against Judah), Israel is linked with the judgments pronounced on Syria. Partners in crime means partners in judgment.

The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap [[Isa. 17:1](#)].

"It shall be a ruinous heap" -- there will be those quick to point out that this has not been fulfilled, inasmuch as the present-day city of Damascus claims to be the same as the original city. As I have said before, there is a far-off fulfillment of all these prophecies and a local or contemporary fulfillment also. There are two possible explanations for the problem presented by this prophecy:

1. Historians are not always accurate in their identification of such things as the locations of ancient cities. One man wrote a profound history not long ago and then made the statement that the biggest liars in the world have been historians. In the area of present-day Damascus there happen to be many ruins of a city, and any one of these ruins could be the original Damascus. Damascus is like a great many of the ancient cities, in that when it was destroyed in one place, they did not always rebuild on the same site but shifted it somewhat to another location. (Other cities, such as the sacred city of Jerusalem, were rebuilt on exactly the same site because of the significance of the location to the people.) We will just leave this problem to the archaeologist who hasn't come up with the answer yet as to which of the ruins is old Damascus.
2. Damascus has withstood the ravages of war throughout history and has never ceased being a city, although it has shifted locations. It probably is the oldest city in the world. It thus far has survived every catastrophe that has come upon the earth, particularly in a land that has seen army after army march through it. But it will not survive during the Great Tribulation period. It will be destroyed; and, as Isaiah says here, it will cease being a city. It will become a ruinous heap.

Both of these explanations show the accuracy of the prophecy that Isaiah gives here.

The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid [[Isa. 17:2](#)].

"The cities of Aroer" is a suburban area near Damascus. This entire area would be destroyed. This probably has happened in the past, and it will happen again.

The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts [[Isa. 17:3](#)].

The northern kingdom of Israel must bear her share of the burden or judgment of Damascus because of the alliance they have. Both were besieged by Tiglath-pileser, as recorded in [2Kings 15:29](#), and were finally deported by the Assyrian, Shalmaneser, as recorded in [2Kings 17:6](#). This certainly was a partial fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy; and, as far as many are concerned, it is the total fulfillment. But I feel that all of this is looking even to a future day. Certainly this has been fulfilled partially at least, but oftentimes in the Word of God we find that God is letting us know, by giving an earlier partial fulfillment, that a prophecy will be completely fulfilled.

In the remainder of this chapter we find that the judgment is going to be carried out. I will not go into much detail here.

Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips [[Isa. 17:10](#)].

Isaiah is talking to the northern kingdom of Israel, and what he says has been literally fulfilled. It has its spiritual application also, as all of this does. The land of Israel in our day has been planted with pleasant plants and slips. I had the privilege personally of setting out five trees in Israel. The forests of the cedars of Lebanon have almost been removed, but there are many trees in that land. The Mount of Olives was covered with trees, but while the Turks controlled Palestine, practically all the land was denuded of its greenery. After World War I England began a movement to plant trees in that land, and the present government of Israel has continued this policy, so that literally millions of trees have been set out.

Chapter 18

The Burden Of The Land Beyond The Rivers Of Ethiopia (18:1-7)

Chapter 18 deals with the fifth burden, that of the land "beyond the rivers of Ethiopia." The exact nation that Isaiah had in mind has not been clearly established, so there have been many interpretations. Some have thought that he is talking about Egypt, but the description does not fit that country. Also, Egypt is the subject of the next chapter, where we see that God is not through with that kingdom. Prophecy literally has been fulfilled concerning her. Those who say that chapter 18 is referring to England and the United States weary me with that interpretation. I feel like yawning, as that is certainly not sound interpretation of the Word of God!

I believe that Ethiopia best suits the text and tenor of Scripture. But which Ethiopia is intended? There are two mentioned in Scripture. The word for Ethiopia is Cush. There is one in Asia (see [Gen. 2:13](#)), and there is one in Africa. I believe we are talking about the Ethiopia that is in Africa. It is the land "beyond the rivers," and the rivers of Ethiopia are the Nile River.

Now God calls the world's attention to Ethiopia:

Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia [[Isa. 18:1](#)].

"Woe" is an unfortunate translation. Actually, it is the same word that is translated as "ah" in [Isaiah 1:4](#), where it is a sigh, or as "ho" in [Isaiah 55](#), where it is a form of address that demands attention. Here God is saying, "Ho, to the land -- Hear Me, listen to this!"

"Shadowing with wings" might better be translated "rustling with wings." This is quite interesting. A missionary to the land for quite some years told me that Ethiopia is noted for its birds. It is called "the land of wings." This helps to confirm that the land in question here is Ethiopia.

That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled! [[Isa. 18:2](#)].

Some have held this sea power to be England or the United States, but "vessels of bulrushes" would not characterize the boats of any modern nation! Dr. F. C. Jennings, in his profound work on Isaiah, makes a good case for the steamboat, but since modern ships use oil, this seems to have no place in our day.

"A nation scattered and peeled" is Israel. This is patently evident, and most of the sound students of the Word of God concur in this.

All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye [[Isa. 18:3](#)].

Many students of the Word consider the "ensign" mentioned here to be the ark of the tabernacle, which was later transferred to the temple. It disappeared at the time of the Babylonian captivity, and there is a tradition which says it was carried to Ethiopia. I have been told that there is a church in that land that claims to have the ark. I don't know if that is true or not, but an ensign will come out of that land.

In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion [[Isa. 18:7](#)].

This is evidently a reference to the time when the Kingdom of Christ will be established on this earth and the Ethiopians will come again to Jerusalem to worship. There is no judgment spoken against them. In [Psalm 87:4](#), evidently in reply to what he is doing in Jerusalem, the Ethiopian answers that he was born there. God has wonderful things to say about Ethiopia!

CHAPTERS 19 AND 20

Chapter 19

THEME: The burden of Egypt -- through gloom to glory

Chapters 13 -- 23 present eleven judgments against nations that surrounded the nation Israel. The burden of Egypt is the sixth burden. Egypt is certainly one nation we would expect to find on this list. This is one of the greatest passages that illustrate the accuracy of the Word of God. Certainly, fulfilled prophecy is proof that the Bible is the Word of God. No nation figures more prominently on the pages of Scripture than Egypt in its relationship to Israel. Egypt has a longer history than any other nation mentioned in Scripture, including Israel. In fact, it was down in the land of Egypt that the nation Israel was born. Seventy souls from the family of Jacob journeyed there, and four hundred years later they left Egypt with at least a million and a half people. Egypt was an old nation at that time. It has had a continuous history right down to the present day. It is in existence today and plays a prominent part in world events. And it has a glorious future predicted in this chapter. This chapter contains all the elements which enter into the history of the nation -- its past, present, and future.

Egypt came into prominence early in Scripture when Abraham ran away to Egypt and got into difficulties. Later Joseph was sold into Egypt, and during a famine Jacob and his sons went down into Egypt with their families. There Israel became a great nation as slaves in the brickyards. Later on, after the children of Israel returned to the Promised Land, two of their kings, Ahaz and Hezekiah, made an alliance with Egypt and found her an unreliable ally.

During the intertestamental period, between Malachi and Matthew, Israel suffered grievously at the hand of Egypt. When the Lord Jesus Christ was born, He was taken down into Egypt. The gospel made many converts in Egypt during the first three centuries of the Christian era. Out of that section of North Africa came three great saints of the church -- Athanasius, Origen, and Augustine -- and others also. In our day, Egypt has been a thorn in the side of the new nation of Israel.

Fulfilled Prophecy Concerning Egypt (19:1-15)

The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud,
and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at
his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it
[\[Isa. 19:1\]](#).

The idolatry of Egypt is the chief target of God's condemnation. We will pick up this theme again when we get to the Book of Ezekiel where God says that every idol would disappear from Egypt. Perhaps no people were ever given over to idolatry more than the Egyptians, with the possible exception of Babylon, which was the fountainhead of idolatry. What Paul said in [Romans 1:21-23](#) fits Egypt like a glove: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."

History bears testimony to the fact that Egypt was originally monotheistic; that is, they worshiped one God; but they gradually lapsed into the basest sort of idolatry where every creature under heaven was worshiped, including the bull, the frog, the scarab (a bug), the

fish, and all sorts of birds. When Moses was ready to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt, God had to carry on warfare, which I call the battle of the gods, in which God through Moses brought down plagues upon Egypt. Jehovah struck at all forms of idolatry in Egypt -- from the sun in the heavens and the River Nile to frogs and lice in the land. Each plague was directed against one of the gods or idols of Egypt.

Now God comes down again in a cloud like a chariot to destroy the idols of Egypt. It is interesting to know that idolatry has long since disappeared from the land, though the people dwell in the ignorance and superstition of the Moslem religion. I have visited Egypt twice, and there is no darkness like the darkness in the land of Egypt. Isaiah's prophecy has been fulfilled.

And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom [[Isa. 19:2](#)].

At about the time of Isaiah several pharaohs arose who could no longer control this great kingdom, and the army no longer obeyed them. The people no longer respected the government. This caused the setting up of weak city-states that were self-governing for a period of time. For this reason there were great cities such as Thebes and Karnak in Upper Egypt, and in Lower Egypt there was another cluster of great cities. There was a breakup of cities also at Memphis, known in Scripture as Noph.

And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards [[Isa. 19:3](#)].

The proud nation of Egypt had advanced its civilization much further than other nations. There is not a nation under the sun today that does not owe a great deal to the civilization of Egypt. There came a time when Egypt turned to idols and finally in desperation resorted to spiritism. You find that at the time of Moses, for instance, the magicians who were called in could actually duplicate some of the miracles that Moses did. The time came when they could no longer duplicate what Moses did, but what they did at first reveals the fact that they were not fakers; they actually had satanic powers.

"The spirit of Egypt shall fail." The time came when the nation was brought down to a low level.

And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts [[Isa. 19:4](#)].

This "cruel lord" cannot be positively identified from history, as Egypt was attacked and subdued by a series of invaders who eventually reduced the nation to poverty.

And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up [[Isa. 19:5](#)].

The "sea" in this verse refers to the River Nile which was the main artery of the nation and a large body of water. "The rivers" are the canals that were built especially at the

mouth of the river. That delta area had to be kept open in that day because so much soil was being brought down by the River Nile.

And they shall turn the rivers far away; and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither [[Isa. 19:6](#)].

It is quite interesting that even today those "brooks," those outlets to the sea there at the delta, are filled up. It had been a wonderful place, like the Garden of Eden, but it is not that now by any means. Those who have traveled to the land of Egypt are amazed to see that there is no great growth of vegetation along the banks of the Nile. There is no forest or heavy foliage such as is common along other great rivers.

Now notice what God says specifically:

The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more [[Isa. 19:7](#)].

The "paper reeds" are the papyri which were used in that day as paper is used today. It was one of the main industries of Egypt, and it added a great deal to the wealth of Egypt. After clay tablets, papyrus became the writing material of man. The Phoenicians introduced papyrus all over the civilized world of their day, and the main source of this writing material was raised along the Nile River. You won't find it there today. It no longer grows along the banks where it was indigenous. If you go there today, you will find papyri in front of the museum beside the pool that is there, and you see it growing at some of the wealthy homes, especially in the British colony at Cairo. It is a luxury; it is no longer the common plant which grew plentifully along the River Nile. God said it would cease. You can try to find a natural explanation for its dying out, but I believe that God had something to do with it.

The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish [[Isa. 19:8](#)].

Fishing was another great industry in Egypt, as the Nile River abounded in fish. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they missed the fish they had eaten in Egypt. Of course, there were no fish in the desert. God gave them flesh to eat when He sent them quail; but, very frankly, they didn't care too much for quail on toast. They much preferred the fish in Egypt. The fish have disappeared, and to this day fishing is not one of the industries along the Nile. This prophecy was literally fulfilled. When I was in Egypt, I particularly watched for people fishing in the Nile. I don't think I saw over two or three people fishing! In Florida you see hundreds of people fishing along the canals, but you don't see fishing like that in Egypt. God said that the fishermen would mourn and lament -- because they wouldn't catch anything.

Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded [[Isa. 19:9](#)].

Egypt raised flax, and they wove it into remarkable linen. It even excelled the linen made in Ireland in our day. I have been told that while the Irish linen mills get about 180,000

feet of strands per pound, the Egyptian mills got 300,000 -- almost twice the amount. It was very much like silk. It is said that a fisherman could take a net made of that fine twined byssus linen and pull it through the ring on his hand! It was this Egyptian linen that was used in Israel's wilderness tabernacle. The people had brought that wonderful linen with them.

Now God said that that industry would disappear, and it certainly has disappeared. This prophecy has been literally fulfilled.

And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices and ponds for fish [[Isa. 19:10](#)].

The entire fishing industry was to disappear. This has been fulfilled literally. Dr. F. C. Jennings writes, "Egypt's wealth, as already said, practically consists in her river, because of its volume here called a sea." All of that has disappeared.

Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings? [[Isa. 19:11](#)].

The royal line of the pharaohs intermarried so much -- actually brother married sister -- that it produced offspring who were morons. God said:

The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof [[Isa. 19:13](#)].

"Noph" is Memphis as we know it.

"They have also seduced Egypt." We all know the sordid story of Cleopatra (a Greek) who became queen of Egypt.

The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit [[Isa. 19:14](#)].

This is a vivid picture of the reduction of Egypt to a base kingdom.

Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do [[Isa. 19:15](#)].

According to this verse there would be the failure of industry and commerce. They would die, and poverty and wretchedness would overtake the nation. Isaiah has predicted that there will be failure of false religion, failure of material resources, and failure of spiritual power. When these disappeared, the prophecy that Egypt would become a base kingdom was fulfilled. All you have to do is to go to Cairo today to have this confirmed.

Unfulfilled Prophecy (19:16-25)

In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it [[Isa. 19:16](#)].

The phrase, "In that day," places this section in the future. "In that day" Egypt will be afraid like women; that will be their condition when they go into the Great Tribulation period.

And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it [[Isa. 19:17](#)].

You may be thinking that this verse is being fulfilled in our day when we see buildings in Egypt, like the museum in Cairo, sandbagged and protected against a bomb attack.

In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction [[Isa. 19:18](#)].

This entire section looks toward the Day of the Lord for a complete fulfillment.

In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.

And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them [[Isa. 19:19-20](#)].

"An altar to the LORD" has been interpreted by some of the cults as the pyramid. The pyramid is neither an altar nor a pillar, but a monstrous mausoleum for the burying of kings and queens. What will be "a sign"? What will be an ensign? The cross will yet be the place to which Egypt will look instead of to a crescent.

And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it.

And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them [[Isa. 19:21-22](#)].

Egypt has a glorious future. The nation will enter and enjoy the Kingdom with Israel. It may not look like this could be possible in the present hour. Only God can do this.

In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians [[Isa. 19:23](#)].

This freeway will not be for soldiers and armies but for those going to Jerusalem to serve Christ the King.

In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land [[Isa. 19:24](#)].

Note the exalted position of Egypt in the Kingdom.

Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance [[Isa. 19:25](#)].

A blessing is yet to come to Egypt, a despised and debased nation.

Chapter 20

Unfulfilled Prophecy (continued) (20:1-4)

The one great thought in chapter 20 is that in three years Israel would be invaded. Chapter 19 is closed on the high note of future blessing for Egypt in the millennial Kingdom, and this chapter predicts coming events in the near future, which will prove the reliability of Isaiah as a prophet of God.

In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it [[Isa. 20:1](#)].

Tartan was a general in the Assyrian army, mentioned in [2Kings 18:17](#). Ashdod was a city in the northern kingdom of ten tribes. Sargon succeeded Shalmaneser (see [2Kings 17:3](#)).

This is the only place the name of Sargon is mentioned in the Bible. As recent as one hundred years ago historians maintained that Sargon never lived, because they could find no reference to him in secular history. However, archaeologists discovered that the Assyrian form of his name is Sharrukin. Abundant historical materials concerning his reign have come down to us.

At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot [[Isa. 20:2](#)].

Isaiah was to become a walking parable to Israel as a warning not to become confederate with Egypt. Probably Isaiah was not asked to go in the nude. Clothing was and is so essential to the customs of the East and nudity is so revolting that it is obvious that this was not intended. Isaiah was to lay aside his outward tunic of mourning. This would attract immediate and startling attention to the prophet. It would enable Isaiah to make his point publicly. It is well to note the words of F. Delitzsch at this point: "What Isaiah was therefore directed to do was simply opposed to common custom and not to moral decency."

And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia [[Isa. 20:3](#)].

Isaiah was to walk through Israel to let them know what would happen to Egypt. As he walked, we are told, he would be for a sign and wonder for the people.

So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt [[Isa. 20:4](#)].

Since Egypt could not protect herself (nor could Ethiopia), she would not be a reliable ally for Israel. Both Egypt and Ethiopia were invaded by Sargon of Assyria, and this shame which Isaiah had predicted came upon Egypt.

Chapter 21

THEME: Three burdens: Babylon "desert of the sea," Edom "Dumah," and Arabia

Isaiah is enumerating eleven "burdens," or judgments. In this chapter we are going to consider burdens seven, eight, and nine, which are against Babylon, Edom, and Arabia. These burdens are set forth by expressive symbols, and in the day they were given I am sure they were as clear to the people as the noonday sun. In fact, they were as clear to the people in Isaiah's day as the expressions "stars and stripes" and "Old Glory" are to every American. The insignia in this chapter are not quite so clear to us today, and as a result there has been some disagreement among Bible expositors about their meaning. They can be identified as Babylon, Edom, and Arabia, and each one will be considered separately as we go through this chapter. All were enemies or potential enemies of Israel. Each brought a particular misery upon God's people. Each has been judged in time.

This chapter is a neglected part of the Word of God. To prove this, let me ask you a question. When was the last time you heard a sermon or Bible study on this chapter of the Bible? I have a notion that you have never heard a study on [Isaiah 21](#). This is another section of Scripture which confirms my position of a premillennial, pretribulation, dispensational interpretation of the Word of God. It is the only interpretation which would satisfy a passage like this, which is the reason all other systems stay clear of this chapter and other portions of God's Word with like teaching.

The remarkable thing in this chapter is that symbols are used. Now I believe in a literal interpretation of Scripture, but when symbolism is used, it always pictures reality. That is an important thing to remember. Many expositors call a teaching of Scripture symbolism in an attempt to make it disappear. Like a magician says, "hocus-pocus," and it's gone -- so don't worry about it. My friend, let's not try to evaporate this section of Scripture, but let's study it to see what God is saying.

The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land [[Isa. 21:1](#)].

"The desert of the sea" is a strange expression. It is like saying "the dryness of the water" or "how dry the water is." This may not be too peculiar to us since we have "dry ice" and "cold heat." Dr. F. C. Jennings translates this verse, "As sweep the whirlwinds through the south, so comes it from the desert, from the land that strikes with terror." This is a good interpretation of the verse, but it does not identify the nation. But if you keep reading, the nation is identified in [verse 9](#): "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." So we know "the desert of the sea" is Babylon. Before Babylon became a world power, her doom was again predicted. We have already seen that. The first burden in chapters 13 -- 14 was against Babylon. Babylon became so awe-inspiring and frightful, and represented so much in Scripture, that we have this further word concerning its doom. It was the first place of united rebellion against God at the Tower of Babel, and it represents the last

stronghold of rebellion against God. We find this in [Revelation 17-18](#). Religious Babylon is presented in [Revelation 17](#), and commercial Babylon is set forth in [Revelation 18](#).

The expression, "desert of the sea," is a paradoxical phrase. Babylon was geographically located on a great desert plain beside the Euphrates River. It was irrigated by canals from the river. Jeremiah gives this description of Babylon, "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness" ([Jer. 51:13](#)). The desert and the sea form a weird amalgamation here. This same fusion of desert and sea is made by John in Revelation. "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns" ([Rev. 17:3](#)). This is the desert where John beheld the mystery Babylon: ". . . Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" ([Rev. 17:1](#)). It was in the desert that John saw the "many waters." These two verses are symbolic, but they carry through the same pattern. We will find it again in Jeremiah.

Babylon, with its glitter and glamour and as the fountainhead of idolatry and false religion, was a mirage upon the desert. Isn't this tremendous! -- "desert of the sea" -- what a picture! Babylon was not a wonderful place. It was a mirage in the desert. It wasn't a spring or an oasis at all, but a place filled with idols and false religion. There was no life-giving water there for the souls of men. This is something that every pastor, every radio preacher, every church, and every church member ought to turn over in his mind. Is my church or am I a life-giving fountain, or am I just a mirage upon the desert of life?

A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer
dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam;
besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease
[\[Isa. 21:2\]](#).

God commands the twofold nation of Media-Persia to destroy and spoil the city. "Go up, O Elam [Persia]: besiege, O Media." That is exactly what happened. This is a prophecy that was given before the invasion took place.

Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon
me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at
the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it.

My heart panted, fearfulness afrighted me: the night of my
pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me [\[Isa. 21:3-4\]](#).

Once again Isaiah is moved with great feeling and emotion when he learns of the coming devastation. This is the heart of God revealed, desiring to show mercy and loath to judge even so frightful a foe. God's love is as evident here as in the tears of Jeremiah. No one can rejoice in the judgment of God. God says that His judgment is His "strange" work. He does want to judge you; He wants to save you, but the choice is yours. He doesn't want to judge nations either, and that choice is up to them.

Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye
princes, and anoint the shield [\[Isa. 21:5\]](#).

This verse reads as if it were an eyewitness account of the destruction of Babylon as recorded by Daniel (see [Dan. 5](#)). Remember, this was recorded about two hundred years before it transpired. In the midst of the banquet of Belshazzar, the Median general, Gobryas, detoured the river that flowed through the city and marched his army on the dry river bed underneath the walls of the city. He took the city by surprise and shock. This is something that God said would take place.

And he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights:

And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground [[Isa. 21:8-9](#)].

The watchman on the walls of the city tells the people inside what he sees. He says, "As I look out on the desert, here comes a chariot of men, with a couple of horses." They are messengers, and their message is "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." The watchman brings word to the king of Babylon that it has fallen (see [Jer. 51:31-33](#)). All of Babylon's graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground. This is a sigh of sorrow as well as relief. Babylon was the source of all idolatry.

O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you [[Isa. 21:10](#)].

Harvest is the time of judgment. In [John 4:35](#) our Lord said, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." Our Lord said this at the end of the age of law, when judgment was coming against Israel who had had the Law for almost fifteen hundred years. Harvest is the time of judgment.

There is a book I would like to recommend to you at this point, because we are going to study more about Babylon in the Books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Hislop's book *The Two Babylons*, would be a valuable addition to your library.

Burden Of Edom (21:11-12)

The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? [[Isa. 21:11](#)].

Who is "Dumah"? Dumah is a symbolic word. Isaiah played upon words to bring out a deeper meaning. We have already seen that. He used words to carry a message to the people. "Dumah" is Edom with the E removed. You take the E off Edom, and you have Dumah which means "silence." Our word dumb is closer to the intent and purpose of Isaiah. Edom is still a land of deathlike silence.

Seir means "rough or hairy." Esau was the first Seir man (see [Gen. 25:25](#)). He was hairy, and he dwelt in Mount Seir (see [Gen. 36:8](#)). Seir also means "storms." It was a land swept with storms. "Silence and Storm." What a play on words, and what a message!

Edom is obviously the country involved. Out of the land of silence and storm comes this inquiry, which is twice repeated: "Watchman, what of the night?" In other words, "How much of the night is gone?" How long will it be before God's glory will be revealed when the ". . . Sun of righteousness [shall] arise with healing in his wings . . ." ([Mal. 4:2](#))?

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come [[Isa. 21:12](#)].

You see, both morning and night are coming. What will be glory for some will be doom for others. What will be light for God's people will be night for Edomites, the men of the flesh who have rejected God.

Burden Of Arabia (21:13-16)

The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim [[Isa. 21:13](#)].

"Arabia" seems clear enough, but again this is a word with a double meaning. It can be made to mean evening by changing the vowel points. The Hebrew language is a language of consonants with no vowels. Instead it had vowel points, which are little marks above the consonants. Scholars have added vowels to the Hebrew words to make them more readable. In this verse the meaning is quite obvious: it was evening in the history of Arabia. It was later than they thought. Arabia was the land of the Ishmaelites, the Bedouin tribes of the desert -- the modern Arabs. It is interesting that God speaks of them. Abraham's sons, Ishmael and Isaac, never did get along. Their descendants don't get along today either. The Arabs and the Jews are still at each other's throats. If Abraham could see what is going on now, I wonder if he would think the sin he committed was a small sin. My friend, sin never ceases working itself out in the human story.

The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled.

For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.

For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail [[Isa. 21:14-16](#)].

There was a coming judgment upon this land and its people. This chapter of poetic beauty and heart sorrow should not end on this note. It may be "evening" here, but God's day is reckoned "the evening and the morning" -- ". . . the evening and the morning were the first day" ([Gen. 1:5](#)).

The morning is coming; the night of weeping will soon be over, and the new day will dawn. Man's evening of failure, sin, and darkness will end, and God's morning will be ushered in by the coming of the Sun of Righteousness.

Chapter 22

THEME: The burden of the valley of vision (Jerusalem); the history of Shebna and Eliakim

This burden evidently refers to Jerusalem, as we shall point out under the comments on the verses. The burdens began way off at a distance in Babylon, and they have continued to come nearer to Jerusalem. Now the storm breaks in all of its fury upon the Holy City.

Burden Of Jerusalem (22:1-10)

The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops? [[Isa. 22:1](#)].

The "valley of vision" refers to Jerusalem, as [Isa. 22:4](#), [8, 9](#), and [Isa. 22:10](#) imply. The expression, "valley of vision," is another of Isaiah's paradoxical statements. Mountain of vision would be understood, because the mountain is the place of the far view. Moses stood on Mount Nebo to view the Land of Promise. Our Lord looked over Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. But in Scripture a valley symbolizes a place of sorrow, humbleness, and death. Because the vision here is one of sorrow and coming battle, the valley is the proper place for this vision.

Curiosity and fear send people to the housetop to inquire about the approaching danger. See the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in [Isa. 36](#) and [Isa. 37](#). In the last siege our Lord warns these people to leave the housetops and flee (see [Matt. 24:16-17](#)).

Therefore said I, Look away from me: I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people [[Isa. 22:4](#)].

"My people" are, of course, the people of Israel.

Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool.

And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall [[Isa. 22:9-10](#)].

Hezekiah actually took these precautions in defending Jerusalem (see [2Chron. 32](#)). One of the things he did was to put a wall around the fountain so that the city would not run out of water. You can still see it in the land today.

This section refers to the future. As Dr. F. C. Jennings puts it, "The history eventuated in the deliverance of Jerusalem, the prophecy in its capture; therefore the history does not fulfill it."

Just what siege and enemy is in the mind of the prophet? Persia is mentioned by name, but Jerusalem was in ruins while Persia was in power. Apparently all the enemies who have come up against Jerusalem are before us here, from the Assyrians, who only laid a siege but did not enter the city, to the last enemy from the north who will threaten the city but will not enter. The interval between these two has seen this city captured more than any other. This is the burden of Jerusalem.

Brief From The Case Of Shebna And Eliakim (22:15-25)

The unusual insertion at this point of an historical document out of the archives of Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah is worth noting.

Many have seen a picture of the Antichrist in Shebna, while Eliakim sets before us none other than the Lord Jesus Christ who will supplant the Antichrist in this world.

Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say [[Isa. 22:15](#)].

Shebna was secretary of the treasury, a cheap politician under Hezekiah. Apparently he was misappropriating funds (see [2Kings 18:18](#); [2Kings 19:2](#); [Isa. 36:3](#); [Isa. 37:2](#)).

What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock? [[Isa. 22:16](#)].

Shebna was building a tomb to perpetuate his name. It was ironical, as he was to die and be buried in a foreign land ([vv. 17-18](#)).

And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down [[Isa. 22:19](#)].

Shebna, I think, is just an adumbration of Antichrist.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah:

And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah [[Isa. 22:20-21](#)].

Eliakim was the statesman who succeeded Shebna. Eliakim was an unselfish man. He and Shebna are in contrast here. Isaiah has brought together these men who are more than paradoxes -- they are opposites. Shebna pictures the Antichrist, and Eliakim pictures Christ. The language is typical.

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open [[Isa. 22:22](#)].

This verse reminds us of the words of Christ in the New Testament: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" ([Rev. 3:7](#)). How wonderful it is, my friend, to place our lives in the hands of Him who is able to close or open any door!

And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons [[Isa. 22:23-24](#)].

Our salvation likewise hangs on Him.

In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it [[Isa. 22:25](#)].

"In that day" refers to the Great Tribulation period, as we have seen, and this verse refers to Shebna as he pictures the Antichrist. A great many people will put their trust in the Antichrist who is to come. They will look to him for help. They will think he is Christ, but he will be just a nail that will fall.

My friend, have you ever had that experience? You drive a good nail into the wall, hang a heavy coat on it, and it comes down. The Lord Jesus Christ is the nail in a sure place. Shebna was a nail that came down, and so will all others who are like him. Are you hanging everything you've got on the nail that is in a sure place? Many people are not. They are hanging everything they have on something that is not sure. For instance, they make investments. A man told me, "I trusted a lawyer, and he made a mistake." He wasn't a nail in a sure place. Some folk have even trusted a preacher and have found that he was not a nail in a sure place. Only Christ is a nail in a sure place. I hope you are hanging your life and everything you have on Him.

Chapter 23

THEME: The burden of Tyre

In this chapter we come to the eleventh and last burden against the nations. A burden, as we have seen, is a judgment, and these judgments were leveled against the nations around Israel. Each one of these great nations represents or sets before us some principle, philosophy, or system which God must judge. Let me give a recapitulation of these eleven nations and what they represent.

1. Babylon represents false religions and idolatry. Idolatry in our land is covetousness, which is the overwhelming desire to have more and to give ourselves to the accumulation of the material things of the world.
2. Palestine represents true religion which has become apostate. Today you find that the same thing has happened in many churches. They go through rituals, they even repeat the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. From all outward appearances they seem to be resting upon the Bible, but in reality they deny everything that is in it. They are apostate, which means they are standing away from what they once believed.
3. Moab represents formal religion; that is, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

Many of us today could be identified with one of these three. Some of us are giving our lives to the accumulation of material things, and our eyes are filled with the things we want. We are covetous.

Some of us have been brought up in Bible-believing churches but have turned away from their teachings. Others of us go to church and follow forms, ceremonies, and rituals which are beautiful but dead as a dodo bird.

4. Damascus represents compromise. That is the position that most churches (even fundamental churches) are in today. Thank God for those churches that are standing true!

5. Ethiopia represents missions. How we need to be involved in getting out the Word of God!

6. Egypt represents the world. Israel was told to stay out of Egypt -- that is where Abraham got into trouble. And we are admonished, "Love not the world." Many of us are having trouble with the world.

7. Persia (Babylon) represents luxury. My, how most of us love luxury in our affluent society.

8. Edom represents the flesh. Many people serve the flesh today.

9. Arabia represents war. There are two groups of people in our contemporary society: the hawks and the doves. Both are of the world, and the only difference I see in them is that the peace group tells us they are for peace, but they are willing to fight for it!

10. Valley of vision, which is Jerusalem, represents not religion but politics. Some think that in politics will be found the solutions to the problems of the world.

11. Tyre represents commercialism (big business). I would say that the great sin of America today is commercialism, believing that the almighty dollar can solve all our problems. When a problem comes up, Congress votes for a little money, and people for whom it is intended never get it, of course. Every poverty program has hurt rather than helped the poor. Why? Because godless men just don't have the right solutions. The poor haven't learned that yet, because they are also far from God. It is only the Lord Jesus Christ who has any love for the poor and really knows how to help them.

Now let us look at the burden of Tyre. Tyre and Sidon were the two great cities of the Phoenicians. Sidon was the mother city, and she was soon surpassed by her proud and rich daughter, Tyre.

The ships of the Phoenicians entered all ports of the Mediterranean Sea and even penetrated the uncharted ocean beyond the Pillars of Hercules. The vessels of Phoenicia brought tin from Great Britain -- in fact, the meaning of Britannia is "the land of tin." The Phoenicians were aggressive and progressive people. Carthage, in North Africa, was settled by them. Carthage, the great enemy of Rome, was a Phoenician city, and Cyprus owed its prosperity to trading with Tyre. There were also other centers that the Phoenicians founded -- Tarshish for instance. You remember that when Jonah tried to flee from the Lord, he bought a ticket for Tarshish. Tarshish was on the southern coast of Spain. Who founded it? The Phoenicians did. It is also of interest that the Phoenicians invented the alphabet.

Hiram, king of Tyre, was one of the great friends of King David. When we get to [Ezekiel 26](#), we are going to see a remarkable prophecy concerning Tyre, which had an exact

fulfillment. God said that Tyre would be destroyed by Babylon and would be taken into captivity for seventy years just as Judah went into captivity for seventy years. The people of Tyre returned to their land, as did Israel, after the captivity and rebuilt their city on an island in the Mediterranean Sea about half a mile from the old city. God said that the ruins of the old city would be scraped (see [Ezek. 26:4](#)), and, later, Alexander the Great scraped the ancient site of Tyre to make a causeway to the island city. He was wise enough not to attempt a battle by sea, because the Phoenicians were experts with ships; so he built a causeway from the old city on the mainland to the new city on the island. I've walked down that causeway and it is filled with pieces of broken pottery. I could have filled tubs with pieces of pottery, but, of course, no one is allowed to do that. I put one little piece in my pocket, because it looked as if there was plenty to spare. Where did all the pottery and pillars and rubble come from? It came from the ruins of ancient Tyre. Alexander the Great literally scraped the surface of the old city to build his causeway, and you cannot tell where the site of the old Tyre used to be -- it's all out there in the causeway. When Alexander took the city, the prophecy of Ezekiel was fulfilled exactly as God said it would be: "And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD ([Ezek. 26:14](#)). My friend, today there is a little Turkish town near there, but the site of ancient Tyre is still in ruins.

If an atheist wants to disprove the Word of God, I suggest that he do more than stand on a street corner and blab about the fact that he doesn't believe in God. I challenge him to go over to the ancient site of Tyre and rebuild the city. However, I warn him that others have tried to do it and have failed.

In fact, there is a ready-made city, the rock-hewn city of Petra, that is all ready to be moved into. The only problem is that God said it would not be inhabited. Anyone can try to start a colony there, but he won't succeed. A German unbeliever took a group of people to Petra and tried to start a colony, but it didn't last long. You won't succeed either, friend. God said that Tyre won't be rebuilt and that Petra won't be inhabited.

Divine Responsibility For Tyre's Destruction (23:1-9)

The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them [[Isa. 23:1](#)].

The picture here is that of ships coming home to Tyre from Tarshish where there is a colony of the Phoenicians. Word is brought to them that Tyre has been destroyed. As they sail near, they see the smoke of the city. Then they see that the city has been leveled and the harbor blocked. It will no longer be a great commercial center.

Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished [[Isa. 23:2](#)].

"Zidon," or Sidon, was about thirty miles up the coast from Tyre. Tyre and Sidon go together like pork and beans go together. They were the two leading cities of the Phoenicians. The prominent sea merchants of Sidon had made Tyre the great city it was. It is interesting that the prophecy concerning the destruction of Tyre was literally fulfilled. But destruction was not predicted for Sidon, and Sidon continues as a city

today. Currently, Sidon is the place to which oil is brought to be loaded on shipboard and taken to other parts of the world.

And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, is her revenue; and she is a mart of nations [[Isa. 23:3](#)].

Sihor means "black" and refers to the Upper Nile, the silt of which flooded Egypt and made it fertile. The wealth of Egypt had flowed through the port of Tyre, and now that is ended, and there is going to be a depression -- a real one!

Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins [[Isa. 23:4](#)].

There is a suggestion here that Tyre is the daughter of Sidon. Historically this is accurate.

As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre [[Isa. 23:5](#)].

The destruction of Tyre ruined the commerce of Egypt in that day.

Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle [[Isa. 23:6](#)].

The fall of Tyre caused universal mourning, even to a colony that was way over on the southern coast of Spain. Some of the inhabitants of Tyre escaped in ships to Tarshish when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city.

Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn [[Isa. 23:7](#)].

Any great commercial center is a city which is also a fun center because there will be many things in that city that are pleasing to the flesh. Now the Tyrians are urged to flee as far as possible because this city which was formerly a "joyous city" has come to an end.

Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth? [[Isa. 23:8](#)].

"The crowning city" means the giver of crowns. You see, Tyre established crown colonies. Great Britain has done the same thing in more recent times. A crown colony is under the legislation and administration of the crown rather than having its own constitution and representative government.

The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth [[Isa. 23:9](#)].

It was the Lord of hosts who had determined the destruction of Tyre. He offers no apologies for making the arrangement.

Human Responsibility For Tyre's Destruction (23:10-14)

Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength [[Isa. 23:10](#)].

The "river" is the Nile. As the Nile has overflowed her banks, the colony of Tarshish is now free to do as she pleases since Tyre has fallen and is no longer able to control her.

"There is no more strength" means that there is no girdle that holds her up or binds her.

He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms:
the LORD hath given a commandment against the merchant city,
to destroy the strong holds thereof [[Isa. 23:11](#)].

Have you noticed this threefold description of Tyre? In [verse 7](#) Tyre is called a "joyous city." In [verse 8](#) Tyre is called a "crowning city." In [verse 11](#) Tyre is called a "merchant city." All three of these are apt descriptions of Tyre.

And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin,
daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt
thou have no rest [[Isa. 23:12](#)].

What is suggested in [verse 4](#) is plainly declared here. Tyre is the daughter of Sidon. Sidon was the older city, and rich merchants from there had founded Tyre and given her prestige. The joy of prosperity was to disappear. Both Tyre and Sidon would suffer.

"Pass over to Chittim" -- probably some thought that by fleeing to Cyprus they might make a fresh beginning. In this, too, they were to be disappointed. God was responsible for what happened to them, although He used human instruments.

Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, till the
Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set
up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; and he
brought it to ruin [[Isa. 23:13](#)].

When Assyria was a great nation, Chaldea (Babylon) was just a hick town. Now Babylon is the ruler of the world.

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste [[Isa. 23:14](#)].

Recovery Of Tyre -- Partial And Complete (23:15-18)

And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten
seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of
seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot [[Isa. 23:15](#)].

Tyre was to go into captivity for seventy years.

And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the
LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall
commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face
of the earth [[Isa. 23:17](#)].

At the end of seventy years Tyre was to return and begin once again her world commerce. Once more she would become a great commercial center, and she would

commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. The prophet compares Tyre to a harlot plying her unholy trade. That is the way God speaks of these great commercial centers.

Now we move down the ages to the last days, the time of the Great Tribulation. Here we find that Tyre will again be a great nation and will enter the Millennium.

And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing [[Isa. 23:18](#)].

"Her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD." Now it is all dedicated to the Lord. "And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour" ([Ps. 45:12](#)).

Chapter 24

THEME: Coming -- the Great Tribulation

This brings us to a new section, although the theme is still judgment. Chapter 23 concluded the judgment against the nations. We have seen God's judgment snowballing from nation to nation, and now it comes down to the final judgment that is coming upon the earth, which our Lord Jesus Christ labeled the Great Tribulation period. Both F. Delitzsch and F. C. Jennings consider this section thoroughly eschatological; that is, it refers to the final judgment from God which will come upon the whole world. In contrast to the judgments upon the nations in chapters 13 -- 23 which have largely been fulfilled, this final judgment is entirely future.

Worldwide Judgment From God (24:1-6)

Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof [[Isa. 24:1](#)].

"Earth" in this verse is the Hebrew word *erets* and could mean either the land of Israel or the whole world. The whole world conforms better to the context in this chapter. Actually, the judgment could be said to be twofold, referring not only to the land of Israel, but to the entire world.

Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left [[Isa. 24:6](#)].

God promised Noah that He would never destroy the earth again with a flood. Note here that the judgment is fire -- "burned." [2Peter 3:6-7](#) says, "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

Preservation Of The Saints (24:13-15)

In [verses 13-15](#) we see that the saints are preserved through the Great Tribulation period.

When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people,
there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning
grapes when the vintage is done.

They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the
LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the
LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea [[Isa. 24:13-15](#)].

The remnant will be small, and they will lift up their voices to glorify God. Now in the time of testing, during the Tribulation, they will be able to glorify the Lord, "even the name of the LORD God of Israel." So there is to be a remnant at that time, which will be of Israel, and also out to the very "isles of the sea," which will include the whole earth, of course.

Universal And Unparalleled Suffering (24:16-18)

From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even
glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe
unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea,
the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously [[Isa. 24:16](#)].

"My leanness, my leanness" -- when the prophet sees the awful character of the destruction of the Great Tribulation, he cries out, as Dr. Jennings translates it, "My misery, my misery." It is going to be a terrible time.

Our Lord described this period of time in just as striking language when He said, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" ([Matt. 24:21-22](#)).

Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the
earth [[Isa. 24:17](#)].

This verse states that there are three dangers that will be upon the inhabitants of the earth in that day.

1. "Fear" -- there is no freedom from fear here. From the time of the Atlantic Truce, drawn up by Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt, politicians have talked about bringing freedom from fear to the world. How about it? Is the world free from fear today? Mobs are marching. Dissatisfaction and fear are everywhere. And fear will be multiplied during the Tribulation.

2. "Pit" -- is danger of death. Hanging over the world today is the threat of the atom bomb, and it spells frightful death to the population of the world. God says He won't let the population be destroyed. The Lord Jesus said, "Except those days be shortened, no flesh would be able to survive," but He is going to shorten those days.

3. "Snare" -- is deception. What the Lord Jesus Christ said as He began the Olivet discourse fits right into the Great Tribulation period. In [Matthew 24:4](#) the Lord said, ". . .

Take heed that no man deceive you." It will be a time when people will believe that they are entering into the Millennium. We get the impression today that some of the great world leaders think they are going to bring in the Millennium. Well, they are going to bring in nothing but the Great Tribulation Period, and the Antichrist will take over. The world will think they are entering the Millennium, when in fact they are entering the Tribulation. One of the things that will characterize the Antichrist is deception. He will be a deceiver. After all, that is what his papa, the Devil is.

How many people there are who are being deceived today! They are deceived about life. How many people are even thinking about eternity? Not many. Most people think only of the here and now. Science is now rejecting the creation account -- they don't want it. This is a great day of deception. You can be deceived by science; you can be deceived by politicians; you can be deceived by the news media; you can be deceived by the military; and you can be deceived by all of the malcontents who are protesting today. The only help available is the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn to Him. He has been made unto us wisdom, and He is the only hope. During the Tribulation people will be deceived; the Antichrist will be able to look at the world and privately say, "Suckers!" And that's what they will be. The Devil has said that about the human race for a long time, and that is what we are unless we turn to Christ.

And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake [[Isa. 24:18](#)].

Those who don't go down into the pit of death will be snared. The Book of Revelation says that one fourth of the population is going to be taken out at one time in a great judgment, and at another time one third of the population will die.

Tribulation Saints Are Raised From The Dead (24:22-23)

This is a marvelous passage of Scripture that speaks of resurrection.

And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited [[Isa. 24:22](#)].

They shall go down into death; then they will be raised from the dead. I believe the meaning of this is that the Tribulation saints will have part in the first resurrection. They will be raised from the dead (see [Rev. 20:4](#)).

The Great Tribulation will end with the coming of the King (see [Rev. 19:11-16](#)).

Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously [[Isa. 24:23](#)].

"The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed" -- even nature is going to respond to the King when He comes to rule. Christ Jesus is the only One who can end this period known as the Great Tribulation.

CHAPTERS 25--27

Chapter 25

THEME: Coming -- the Kingdom

After the Lord Jesus comes and ends the Tribulation, He establishes the Kingdom. Chapters 25 and 26 bring us into the Kingdom Age. The King is coming, and there will be the Kingdom of Heaven upon this earth. This has been predicted throughout the Old Testament. And when John the Baptist began his ministry, his message was, ". . . Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" ([Matt. 3:2](#)). Then the Lord Jesus took up the theme, ". . . the kingdom of heaven is at hand" ([Matt. 4:17](#)).

But He was rejected as King. You can't have a kingdom without a king. When He was rejected as King, He could then say to individuals, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ([Matt. 11:28](#)). This is still His invitation today. It is a message to be sent out to individuals in our day asking them to exercise their free wills. Whether you know it or not, you are making a decision today. You are either accepting Him or rejecting Him. There is no neutral ground. Our Lord said, "He that is not with me is against me . . ." ([Matt. 12:30](#)).

This wonderful twenty-fifth chapter is a song, a song of three stanzas. This chapter, like chapter 12, is a paean of praise, a song of undiluted joy.

Praise To Go For Deliverance From All Enemies (25:1-5)

O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name;
for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are
faithfulness and truth [[Isa. 25:1](#)].

This is praise to God for deliverance. This is a song of sheer delight, wonder, and worship. This comes from a heart full to overflowing, for the worshiper has come into a new knowledge of who God is and what He has done.

This is not the average song service that you have in church on Wednesday night. Some of the saints sit there and wonder why they came in the first place. Those who are singing this song are those who are eager to worship God because of His faithfulness and because He is true. These are the attributes of Deity, and they are foreign to humanity. The psalmist says, "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man" ([Ps. 118:8](#)). Faithfulness is the fruit of the Spirit, not the work of the flesh. Truth is the very opposite of man. In [Psalm 116:11](#) David said, "I said in my haste, All men are liars" (italics mine). I remember Dr. W. I. Carroll commenting, "I have had a lot of time to think it over, and I still agree with David."

For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a
palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built [[Isa. 25:2](#)].

All of the past is gone now. They are delivered from the enemies of the past. They no longer need a wall around a city to protect them.

Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the
terrible nations shall fear thee [[Isa. 25:3](#)].

Does this mean worldwide conversion? I believe it does, for this is the Millennium. Man will turn to God in that day. The greatest turning to God is in the future when the night of sin and Great Tribulation will be past. Weeping shall endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. That is what we have here. There will be boundless joy during the Kingdom Age.

Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low [[Isa. 25:5](#)].

They recall the awful blasphemy of the last days personified in one of whom it is written: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" ([2Thess. 2:4](#)). The Antichrist will be put down as are all the enemies of God.

Praise To God For Provision Of Present Needs (25:6-8)

And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined [[Isa. 25:6](#)].

"Fat things" have to do with physical provision certainly. The redeemed earth will produce bountifully. (Eating fat things in that day will not be a problem -- you won't have to worry about putting on weight!) However, the "fat things" are likewise the wonderful spiritual feast in that day. I think there will be Bible classes held during the Millennium. I don't know, but maybe the Lord will let me teach one of them.

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it [[Isa. 25:8](#)].

This verse is quoted by Paul in [1Corinthians 15:54](#), which says, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Praise To God In Anticipation Of Future Joys (25:9-12)

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation [[Isa. 25:9](#)].

As we come to the final stanza, attention is drawn to the person of God. It is with Him that men have to do. The world will be deceived by Antichrist, but the real Christ, the real Messiah, the real Ruler of this earth will come. His salvation is going to be vital to man in that day. Man "will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Now this is a strange verse:

For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill [[Isa. 25:10](#)].

Why is Moab introduced here? I will be very frank with you; it is difficult to say. When Moab is up, God is down. When God is up, Moab is down. In the Kingdom Moab is down, and God will be on top. As you may remember, Moab represents a form of godliness but denies the power thereof.

And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down,
lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust [[Isa. 25:12](#)].

All the pride of man will be brought down. This is the period when the meek shall inherit the earth ([Matt. 5:5](#)). The meek are not doing too well in our day!

Chapter 26 continues the Kingdom theme.

Chapter 26

The Kingdom (26:1-19)

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks [[Isa. 26:1](#)].

This is their prospect. In that day this song will be sung in Judah. They don't have this song today, friend. It is obvious that the present return to Israel is not a fulfillment of prophecy.

With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness [[Isa. 26:9](#)].

"With my soul have I desired thee in the night." I wonder if you and I recognize the great need for communion with Christ. In the little book of the Song of Solomon, the bride said, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth . . ." ([Song 1:2](#)). That was the kiss of pardon and of peace and of passion. Then the bride, recognizing that she can't rise to the heights she desires, says, "Draw me, we will run after thee . . ." ([Song 1:4](#)). Isaiah is expressing the same thought here. "With my soul have I desired thee in the night." My friend, do we have that passion for God? I hear a lot of pseudo-love today and a smattering of spirituality. I see people pretending to be pious and hear them quoting platitudes. I get tired of hearing, "Oh, I love the Lord, and I want to serve Him." My friend, when you lie on your bed at night, do you have a desire for God? Do you really want Him? Do you have a real passion for Him? Are you able to say, "Draw me, and I will run after thee"?

In the time of the Millennium they will be saying, "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early."

I confess that many times I find myself running from Him. I find myself running ahead of Him, out of His will, and then the tensions come. I am frustrated, and I say, "Oh, I've left Him. I've gotten away from Him. I am not close to Him." I don't see many people crying out for God today. I don't mean to be critical, but I don't see much of it today, and when I do detect it, what a blessing it is to my own heart.

LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer
when thy chastening was upon them [[Isa. 26:16](#)].

In the past the remnant turned in prayer to God. Now they go back in retrospect to those difficult days:

Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her
delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in
thy sight, O LORD [[Isa. 26:17](#)].

In the Great Tribulation the nation Israel was like a woman in childbirth, so great was their suffering. The prophet is now looking back over that period (which is yet future). He saw it from the other side of the river of time.

We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were
brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the
earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen [[Isa. 26:18](#)].

"We have as it were brought forth wind" -- that is, the suffering produced no fruitful results. This period did not change the heart of the wicked. They continued to blaspheme the God of heaven.

Today the suffering that comes to you, like a birth pang, will either bring forth something worthwhile, or it can just be wind. I am afraid many of us have suffered for nothing, simply because we do not see that all things work together for the glory of God. Remember that Isaiah is talking about the coming Millennium, and we could be living in a state similar to the Millennium if we would only seek Him early.

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they
arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the
dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead [[Isa. 26:19](#)].

Chapter 27 concludes the threefold song of the coming of the Kingdom which we have in chapters 25 -- 27.

Chapter 27

Song Of The Vineyard (27:1-5)

In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword
shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that
crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea
[[Isa. 27:1](#)].

"In that day" -- projects us immediately into the future. As we have said, this is a technical expression that refers to the Day of the Lord. It is a day that begins, as the Hebrew day did, with the evening, the time of the Great Tribulation, and it goes on into the millennial Kingdom. I personally feel that it goes on into eternity, as that will be a sunrise that will never end.

"The LORD with his sore and great and strong sword." The Lord's sword is the Word of God. In describing the coming of the Lord Jesus, [Revelation 1:16](#) says, "And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." With that sword He will smite the

nations. An amillennialist will say, "You say you take the Bible literally. Is this a literal sword?" Well, I've discovered that the tongue is really a sharp thing. And [Hebrews 4:12](#) tells us, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword . . ." I take it that the Word of God is meant here. It is by His Word -- that's all He needs. By His Word He created all things, and by His Word shall He judge.

Whom is He going to judge? "Leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent." In that day, at the beginning of the Kingdom, the Lord Jesus will bring judgment upon the serpent, leviathan, who is Satan. In [Revelation 20:1-3](#) we are told that Satan will be shut up in the bottomless pit for one thousand years. In [Revelation 12:9](#) we read, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." [Job 41:15](#) says of him, "His scales are his pride . . ." The scales are for his protection, and Satan thinks he is invulnerable, that he cannot be touched. This is his pride. He doesn't realize, even today, as I understand it, that he can be judged. He probably thinks he is beyond the judgment of almighty God.

There are a great many people today who think that there is no judgment coming. They laugh at the idea. That is the thinking of Satan, my friend.

F. Delitzsch has suggested that "the piercing serpent," or literally, "swift-fleeing serpent," represents the Tigris River and thereby the nation of Assyria. The "crooked serpent" represents the winding Euphrates and thereby the nation of Babylon. "The dragon that is in the sea" represents the Nile River and thereby the nation of Egypt. This would not militate against "leviathan" meaning Satan, but would enforce that interpretation since Satan was the power behind these kingdoms.

In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine [[Isa. 27:2](#)].

Actually, I believe that chapter 27 begins with [verse 2](#) and that [verse 1](#) belongs with the previous chapter. However, that is a technical point with which I will not get involved. There is a change of subject at this point.

"In that day sing ye unto her." This is the Millennium, and we all can sing now -- even I will be able to sing.

"A vineyard of red wine" speaks of abundance, fruitfulness, bounty, and joy. What a contrast this is to [Isaiah 5](#)! In [Isaiah 5](#) we had the song of the vineyard, but it was a dirge. That vineyard was Israel, and God was going to bring judgment because she hadn't brought forth fruit. Here we are in the Millennium, and there is an abundance of fruit. Why?

I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day [[Isa. 27:3](#)].

The Lord is the husbandman here, and never again will He ever let the vineyard out to others. He is the husbandman who keeps an eye continually upon it. He watches it night and day so that no enemy may enter. This ought to say something to those who believe that God is through with Israel. Scripture makes it clear that He is not through with Israel.

Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me [[Isa. 27:5](#)].

The enemy can make peace with God even in the Kingdom, for God never ceases to be merciful. Thank God for that! He is rich in mercy, which means that He has plenty of it. I need a lot of it myself. He is rich in grace. We will find out that ten million years from today His grace will still be available to us. I think we will need it even in heaven.

"That he may make peace with me." This is the only place in Scripture where it is even suggested that man can make peace with God. Of course here it has to do with obedience to the King and not the acceptance of Christ as Savior. Man cannot make peace with God about the sin question. God has already done that. [Romans 5:1](#) says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (italics mine). When you are ready to agree with God and trust Him for what He has done through Christ on the cross, then you will have peace. You won't have it until then. This verse is not talking about our day but about the time of the Millennium.

Smiting Of Israel And Her Enemies (27:7-13)

Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? [[Isa. 27:7](#)].

This verse poses a question that has been partially answered already in the Book of Isaiah: Why does God judge Israel more than other nations? Light creates responsibility. In view of the fact that Israel had more light, her sin was blacker and her punishment was greater. She received more stripes than the nations who smote her. In [Amos 3:2](#) we read, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Her punishment was severe, but God did not destroy Israel as He did some other nations. [Psalm 118:18](#) tells us, "The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death." God will not allow Israel to be destroyed.

By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up [[Isa. 27:9](#)].

It was not the suffering for sin that atoned for Israel's sin. The sin of Jacob was purged by a blood offering, and the sin of the nation will be expiated by the blood of Christ. Just as you were saved as a sinner, that is the way it will take place in that day. Those who say that God is through with Israel simply have not read passages of Scripture like this:

Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.

When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour [[Isa. 27:10-11](#)].

However, the cities that Israel built are to be destroyed like any city that man builds apart from God. The great ruins in the world are the result of the judgment of almighty God. Why? Because they rejected light. They not only rejected light, they also rejected the person of the Son of God.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem [[Isa. 27:12-13](#)].

This section reveals that God definitely intends to restore the nation Israel to the Promised Land, and I have no argument with those who deny it. I just want to say this: It is not a question of whether Israel is going to be restored to the land. It is a question of whether or not you believe the Word of God. If you believe God's Word, what are you going to do with a passage like this? You cannot spiritualize it, because the prophet talks about Assyria, Egypt, Israel, and Jerusalem. These are literal places. Israel is going to be literally restored. If you have a high view of the inspiration of Scripture, then believe what God says.

This prophecy has never been fulfilled in the past. Its fulfillment is yet future. My friend, when God moves the Jews into the land, God will move them. When they come, they will worship Him. Just as He called you and me, He will call them. We are not seeing the fulfillment of this today.

Chapter 28

THEME: The immediate invasion of Ephraim by Assyria is a picture of the future and a warning to Jerusalem.

This chapter brings us to an entirely new section. The prophecies which were totally future are included in chapters 24 -- 27 inclusively. From chapters 28 -- 35 we have prophecies which have a local and past fulfillment, and also there are those that reach into the future and cover the same period as in the previous section. This new section is identified by six woes, and it culminates in the great War of Armageddon in chapter 34, followed by the millennial benefits brought to the earth in chapter 35.

Now the chapter before us is a fine illustration of the combination of the near and far view, the past and future events, the local and immediate and the general and far distant prophecies. We will see that which has been fulfilled and that which is yet to be fulfilled.

The northern kingdom of Israel, designated here by the term Ephraim, was soon to go into Assyrian captivity. This was a preview of the coming future day, but it was to be a warning to the southern kingdom of Judah. The first part was fulfilled when Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, invaded Ephraim in 721 B.C., overthrew the northern kingdom, and took the people into captivity.

The Immediate Captivity Of Ephraim (28:1-3)

The first woe is against the northern kingdom.

Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! [\[Isa. 28:1\]](#).

Ephraim and Israel are synonymous terms for the ten northern tribes, also called Samaria. The picture here of drunkards is both literal and spiritual. They were in a stupor as far as spiritual understanding was concerned. To be spiritually drunk is to be filled with pride.

Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand [\[Isa. 28:2\]](#).

The Assyrian is designated here as a strong one, a destroying storm, and a flood of mighty waters.

The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet [\[Isa. 28:3\]](#).

Maybe you don't like this, but God does not apologize for it; He simply tells us that this is what He did. The prophet picks up the future of the drunkard here. A high level of civilization had been developed in the northern kingdom with its comforts and outward beauty expressed in homes and gardens and trees. All you have to do to confirm this is go to the hill of Samaria and see the palace built by Omri and Ahab. This is the place where Ahab and Jezebel lived. It seems that the Lord always gives the wicked and the rich the best places to live, and I think it is poetic justice. It is not going to be so good for the wicked and rich in the next world; so they have it pretty good here. The hill of Samaria is one of the most beautiful spots in the land. When I stood there I could see the Mediterranean Sea, the Jordan valley, Mount Hermon in the north covered with snow, and the walls of Jerusalem in the south. My friend, you could not ask for a more beautiful place to live. If a real estate man develops that hill and sells lots, I hope I can buy one and build a house there. It's a great place, but God judged these people in the northern kingdom, and He brought down their high civilization.

The Far Distant Judgment (28:5-13)

Now the prophet begins to move into the future. The expression "in that day" refers to the Day of the Lord, which begins with the Great Tribulation and extends on through the Millennium.

In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people [\[Isa. 28:5\]](#).

This looks into the future to the millennial Kingdom which is coming. The thing that caused the downfall of Ephraim, the northern kingdom, was their pride -- they wore a crown of pride. But in that future day when God brings them back to the land, it will be a crown of glory.

And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment [[Isa. 28:6-7](#)].

A businessman recently told me some of the things that go on in big business. I don't suppose there is a day that goes by that he doesn't make deals with men who make big investments for large profits. He told me about one of these men who was beginning to indulge in sin. He was not faithful to his wife, and he was drinking heavily. He has recently made certain judgments about investments that have caused this businessman to withhold loaning money to him. He told me that when a man begins to drink and indulge in sin he loses his sharpness in business. He said, "Because I am a Christian I may be biased, but I have found over the long haul, over a period of years, that this is factual. I have learned it through bitter experiences."

Now God is making this same observation regarding the northern kingdom: "they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment."

But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken [[Isa. 28:13](#)].

Sections like this have caused some expositors of the past to call Isaiah "the prophet of the commonplace." Teaching is a slow, patient, and continuous work. This is the way that even spiritual truth is imparted. God does not impart it in a flash to a lazy and lethargic soul. As the people lapse into apostasy in any age, it becomes increasingly difficult to impart spiritual truth.

There are many Christians today who are not satisfied with their Christian lives. To be brutally frank, they are ignorant of the Word of God. Then they hear about a wonderful two-week course that will give them the answers to all their problems. They will learn how to handle their marital problems, how to get along with their mother-in-law, how to guide their children aright, and how to become model employees. My friend, let me say this to you very candidly. Neither a little course nor some great emotional experience will solve your problems. There is no shortcut to success in the Christian life. There is only one way to grow as a Christian, and it is so commonplace and ordinary that I hesitate to say it. The Word of the Lord was given unto Israel precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, and there a little. It was the daily grind of getting into God's Word. What happened? Israel did not follow through. They fell backward; that is, they were in a backslidden state. There are many Christians in the same condition today. It is not that they are weaker than anybody else; it is simply that they do not spend enough time in the Word of God. I realize that this method is not very exciting, but line upon line and precept upon precept is the only way you are going to grow in the Christian life.

The Warning To Judah (28:14-20)

Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem [[Isa. 28:14](#)].

The judgment coming to Israel in the north should be a warning to Judah in the south. Ephraim speaks to Jerusalem, Jerusalem speaks to us today, and the Word of God speaks to all of us. It looks as if God wrote this Book, not yesterday, but tomorrow. In fact, it is way ahead of tomorrow's newspaper.

Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves [[Isa. 28:15](#)].

What is this covenant with death and Sheol? Daniel tells us about a future covenant which Israel will make with the Antichrist, the prince who is coming, the Man of Sin, the godless man, the willful king, the beast out of the sea and the beast out of the land, the one who is controlled by Satan (see [Dan. 9:27](#)).

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste [[Isa. 28:16](#)].

What is the answer today to the falsehood in the lives of people and the deception that is abroad which will continue to snowball right on down into the Great Tribulation period? Well, God has already put that answer down. It is a foundation; it is a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. One who believes in it doesn't need to be in a hurry. He can rest in Him. [1Peter 2:6-8](#) speaks of Him: "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." Simon Peter makes it very clear that this stone is Christ.

Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place [[Isa. 28:17](#)].

Judgment for these people is going to come gradually. I think it comes that way today. Sometimes it comes suddenly. But gradual judgment is worse than sudden judgment, for usually the process is so slow that you don't detect it.

For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it [[Isa. 28:20](#)].

Have you ever gone to a hotel or a motel and found that the covers on the bed were not quite long enough? They don't come up to your neck, and if you pull them up, then your feet stick out. Have you ever slept in a short bed, where your feet hang over the edge, or you have to prop your head up, or you have to sleep at an angle? That's not so good, is it? God says to these people, "I am giving you a short bed. The cover won't be quite long enough." From then on the judgment of God will come. It didn't come to Judah for about one hundred years, but it finally came.

The Final Judgment Of God Upon His People (28:25-28)

The remainder of this chapter is almost the parable of the wheat and the tares. He talks about the different kinds of grain, the hard grains and the soft grains, and the different methods of threshing it.

When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place? [[Isa. 28:25](#)].

The grains are "fitches" (sometimes translated fennel or dill), "cummin, wheat, barley, and rie."

For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.

Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen [[Isa. 28:27-28](#)].

A farmer has to be careful about the way he harvests soft grains. Each grain is different.

Now he says that this is the way God judges. Judgment is spoken of as the harvest. The individual or nation actually determines the character of the judgment which is to fall upon them. In other words, if you are hard and resist God, you are a hard grain. You are a hard nut to crack, and the judgment is going to be severe for you. A man came to me and told me that he had lost his wife and two children before he came to himself. He said, "God had to knock me down three times because I was such a hardened sinner." God will thresh you; and, if you are hard, the judgment will be hard.

The Lord Jesus put it like this in [Matthew 13:30](#), "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." In [Matthew 13:41](#) the Lord goes on to say, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." How tremendous this is! We ourselves determine our own judgment. If we only will listen to Him, He will put us over where the wheat is and spare us the severity of His judgment.

Chapter 29

THEME: Jerusalem -- prophecies of immediate future and reaching on into the Kingdom

The prophecies in this chapter are confined to Jerusalem but extend from the invasion of Sennacherib through the time when Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles until the last invader (see [Zech. 14:1-7](#)) shall have destroyed Jerusalem and, finally, to the establishment of the Kingdom when the Messiah shall come and His feet shall touch the Mount of Olives.

It will prove profitable to compare this chapter with our Lord's discourse on Jerusalem in [Matthew 23:37](#) -- [Matthew 24:2](#) and with [Luke 13:34-35](#); [Luke 21:20-24](#).

Jerusalem -- History And Prophecy (29:1-8)

Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices [[Isa. 29:1](#)].

It is necessary to establish the fact that Jerusalem is the city designated under the title of Ariel. Ariel means "lionlike." The word occurs in [2Samuel 23:20](#) which says, "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab. . . ." A lionlike man is an "Ariel" man. The word also carries the meaning of "the lion of God." In [Ezekiel 43:16](#) the same word is translated "altar" and, under certain circumstances, could mean "the altar of God." Both designations are a fitting title for the city of Jerusalem. It is further identified here as "the city where David dwelt." The lion is the insignia of that family. Our Lord is called ". . . the Lion of the tribe of Juda" ([Rev. 5:5](#)). Likewise Jerusalem was the place where the temple of God was, and the altar, of course, was there.

This is a remarkable prophecy concerning Jerusalem. The prophecy began to be fulfilled in Isaiah's day and has continued right down to today. If you walk down the streets of Jerusalem, you will see this prophecy being fulfilled, and it will continue to be fulfilled.

Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow:
and it shall be unto me as Ariel [[Isa. 29:2](#)].

This is judgment upon Jerusalem.

And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.

Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly [[Isa. 29:3-5](#)].

This prophecy was given before Nebuchadnezzar came up to the city of Jerusalem and destroyed it, which marked the beginning of the ". . . times of the Gentiles . . ." ([Luke 21:24](#)). Our Lord said that Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the Time of the Gentiles be fulfilled. The Gentiles have marched through her streets and still do today.

Jerusalem has been besieged and captured more often than any other city. I have in my files a list of twenty-seven sieges that have been leveled against this city throughout history. Almost every time it was taken, it was destroyed. That is why it is not quite accurate for people to say, "Go to Jerusalem and walk where Jesus walked." You are not going to walk where He walked, because Jerusalem is much higher today than it was in His day. For example, the pool of Bethesda was about fifty feet down from the level of the ground today. The Lord Jesus walked down there. It is quite evident that Solomon's temple was probably more than one hundred feet beneath where the Mosque of Omar stands today. The city has been destroyed many times, and each time it was leveled off

and rebuilt on the wreckage. That is what Nehemiah did -- out of the debris and wreckage he rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. Rocks did not have to be hauled in for repair work because there are more rocks over there than they could ever use. I heard a few years ago that stones were being shipped from Indiana to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. That report was proven false, but how foolish it would have been. There is no place on the topside of this earth that is as rocky as Jerusalem and the surrounding area. It is a rugged terrain. That is one reason Jerusalem was so difficult for the enemy to take.

Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision.

It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion [[Isa. 29:6-8](#)].

The final siege of Jerusalem will be the worst of all (see [Zech. 14](#)), but God will intervene at the last moment and deliver His people from extermination. All the dreams of the enemies of God to bring in their own kingdom will be frustrated, and God will put them down. He will build His own Kingdom and establish it Himself, just as He said He would do.

Jerusalem -- Meaning And Message (29:9-15)

Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered [[Isa. 29:9-10](#)].

I have said that Isaiah is the prophet of the commonplace, and what he says fits into our contemporary culture. Did God actually make them sleepy? How did He do it? He kept giving Israel light; and, as He gave them light, they kept rejecting it. They would not accept the truth that He gave them. They could not see it, which revealed that they were blind. That is the way God puts people to sleep and the way He reveals that they are blind. Even the prophets and princes did not anticipate this deliverance from God. They were as blinded to the future as the enemies of God. They were as men who were dead drunk.

And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned [[Isa. 29:11-12](#)].

The attitude of the people, including God's people, before their final deliverance by God was that prophecy was too obscure to be understood, that it was a sealed subject about which they could know nothing. This is the present-day attitude of many church leaders and preachers. I have heard seminary professors and ministers say, "Well, you know, the Book of Revelation is a sealed book. Nobody can understand it." Those who insist that Revelation is a sealed book and that we are not supposed to understand it are saying exactly what the people in Isaiah's day were saying about prophecy. Or, people today will say that they are too busy, that they don't have time to study the Word of God. All kinds of excuses are offered by Christians for their own ignorance of the Scriptures.

The word revelation is from the Greek word apocalypse, which means "unveiled." God took the seal from the Book of Revelation so that it can be understood. In one sense Revelation is the simplest book in the Bible, but you must have an understanding of the sixty-five books that precede it. It is the last book of the Bible, and certainly it is not the place you should begin reading. No book is so organized, and I found it to be the easiest book in the Bible to outline. It is nonsense to say that it is symbolic, a sealed book that we are not supposed to understand. That is what they were saying in Isaiah's day. God will judge you for that kind of thinking because when He gives light and you will not open your eyes, you become blind to the light. Listen to what God says of Revelation in [Revelation 1:3](#), "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." [Revelation 22:10](#) says, "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." It is not a sealed book.

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men [[Isa. 29:13](#)].

If you had lived in Isaiah's day, you would have wondered what Isaiah really meant, because the people were going to the temple. It was crowded -- anytime a sacrifice was offered you would find people there. There was a place for the men, a court for the women, and a court for the Gentiles. Why was God finding fault with these people? They were all coming to church, but they went through all of the ritual with their mouths. It was as if they could say the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, but it did not mean anything to them. They did not believe what they were saying; they did not accept God's Word. God said that their hearts were far from Him. That is the reason He judged them, and that is the reason He is going to judge us today.

The curse of the world today is religion. God would like you to get rid of religion and come to Christ. Religion is the greatest barrier for many people today. I made that statement to a man not long ago. Immediately he countered by saying, "I want you to know, Dr. McGee, that I am a religious man. I am religious by nature." He had a fallen nature, but he had a religious nature. I think I shocked him when I told him that he ought to get rid of his religion and that I was not a religious man. He said, "I cannot believe that there is a preacher who is not religious. If you are not religious, what are you then?" I

told him that I am a sinner who came to Christ and that I have a personal relationship with Him today. It is not a religion but a relationship. Do you have Christ, or don't you? That is the important thing.

Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? [[Isa. 29:15](#)].

Things are so serious for His people that He puts in another "Woe" here. This chapter contains two woes because (1) the people act as if God does not see or know, and (2) they act as if they are getting by with it.

Jerusalem -- Honor And Glory (29:17-24)

Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest? [[Isa. 29:17](#)].

Now we see into the future. The time will come when there will be honor and glory in Jerusalem and in the land. God is not through with that city. Today it looks like a layer cake with one city built on top of the other. God has judged them, and He will judge them again. But Jerusalem will be rebuilt once again, and then it will be the city of God.

And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness [[Isa. 29:18](#)].

The deaf are going to hear, and the blind are going to see.

The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel [[Isa. 29:19](#)].

You have heard the old bromide, "No one is so blind as those who will not see." Today, as in Isaiah's day, there is a willful blindness. In that day, in the Millennium, they are going to see.

Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.

But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine [[Isa. 29:22-24](#)].

What are they going to do with the name of God? They are going to make it holy -- they are going to set it apart as something wonderful. Today, God's people, by their lives, should sanctify the name of God. It is a holy name -- but do we treat it that way?

CHAPTERS 30 AND 31

Chapter 30

THEME: Judah admonished not to turn to Egypt for help against Assyria; exhorted to turn to the Lord

These two chapters present largely a local situation, although a larger prophecy of a future time grows out of it. The local prophecy has been literally fulfilled. The southern kingdom of Judah heard and heeded the prophet's warning and did not join with Egypt in order to be delivered from the Assyrian. The northern kingdom of Israel made the mistake of ignoring the prophet's warning, and they went into Assyrian captivity (see [2Kings 17:4](#)). This is one time when the southern kingdom profited by the experience of the northern kingdom.

Admonition Not To Seek Alliance With Egypt (30:1-7)

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel,
but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit,
that they may add sin to sin [[Isa. 30:1](#)].

This is the fourth woe. It is a woe because it is a warning. God says in effect, "Don't go to Egypt for help, because it won't be a good thing for you to do. Help down there is a mirage on the desert."

For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore
have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still [[Isa. 30:7](#)].

Exhortation To Turn To Jehovah For Deliverance (30:18)

God says, "Turn to Me, and I will deliver you" (see [v. 15](#)). This is a marvelous verse, one of the gems of Scripture.

And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto
you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy
upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they
that wait for him [[Isa. 30:18](#)].

Don't be in a hurry. Don't say, "We are at the end of the age, and the Lord is going to come this year or next -- or at least before the year two thousand." God says, "Let Me work this out. I have not given you any dates." Learn to wait upon the Lord. This matter of looking for the Lord Jesus to come to take His own out of the world is a matter of waiting. And we are told that they who wait on the Lord will renew their strength. You cannot rush God. He is in no hurry. Maybe things are not working out the way you think they should; maybe you and I would like to rearrange them, but let God work things out. He has eternity ahead of Him; and, when you and I get in step with Him, life will be much easier for us down here.

Declaration That God Will Deal With The Final Assyrian (30:31-33)

For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten
down, which smote with a rod.

And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the
LORD shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in
battles of shaking will he fight with it.

For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it [[Isa. 30:31-33](#)].

The Assyrian here is the final enemy of God in the Great Tribulation. "Tophet" was a place in the valley of the son of Hinnom where the most abominable idolatries were practiced. Little children were offered as sacrifices! It speaks in this passage of the worst spot in the lake of fire.

"The king" mentioned represents the beast and the false prophet: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" ([Rev. 20:10](#)).

Chapter 31

Declaration That God Will Deal With The Final Assyrian (continued) (31:1-8)

In chapter 31 the prophet warns God's people again not to look to Egypt for help but to trust the Lord to defend Jerusalem. So pressing is the danger, and so evident is the likelihood of the Israelites turning to Egypt, that Isaiah continues to warn Judah of the futility of such a measure. In the future Israel will turn to the wrong ally. They will accept the Antichrist, and God is warning them about it here. God will judge those who turn to outside help instead of to Him.

Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD! [[Isa. 31:1](#)].

This is the fifth woe. It is pronounced on those who go down to Egypt for help.

This has a message for you and me. Woe to you and woe to me when we turn away from God and turn to some materialistic or human help. Don't misunderstand me -- He doesn't intend that you launch out into space and hang there. God expects you to be reasonable. But in the final analysis God wants top priority as far as giving help is concerned. My friend, where do you go for help? To your banker? To your preacher? Every now and then I receive a letter from someone who asks me what he should do in a given situation. Well, I don't know what to do with many problems that arise in my own life! Although it is nice to ask others for advice, in the final analysis we must go to God for help. The psalmist wrote: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God ([Ps. 20:7](#)).

Materialistic philosophy says that it is smart to trust in the stock market or your investments, that it is smart to look to "Egypt." Most of us have some "Egypt" upon which we depend for help. The real source of Israel's difficulty was that they did not look to God, nor did they seek Him. Since they did not trust Him, they turned frantically to some outside, physical display of power.

As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it [[Isa. 31:5](#)].

The Lord will defend and preserve Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah, as we shall see. God assures them that it is a sure thing that the Assyrians will not take the city of Jerusalem.

Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited [[Isa. 31:8](#)].

"Not of a mighty man" -- God says it is not because you are going to be strong enough to drive them away. You won't. God will deal with the Assyrians. Jerusalem's confidence should be in the Lord.

This is a great chapter to read for our own help and strength.

Chapter 32

THEME: The coming King, the coming Tribulation, and the coming Spirit

This chapter is a bright note between the fifth and sixth woes; it is a ray of light to God's people in a dark place in that day.

It has been some time since the person of the King has been before us, but we find Him introduced again at this point, for there can be no Millennium or blessing to this earth without Him.

The King Who Is To Reign (32:1-5)

Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment [[Isa. 32:1](#)].

This verse projects into the Kingdom Age. The King is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. The character of His reign is righteousness. The world has never had a kingdom like this so far.

And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land [[Isa. 32:2](#)].

The Lord is not only King, He is also a Savior-King. He bore the winds and tempest of the judgment of sin for us. He is a Rock for our protection. He was set before us in [Isaiah 26:4](#) as "everlasting strength" or the Rock of Ages (in Hebrew YAH). This is another aspect of His ministry under the figure of the rock. He is a place of hiding for believers in our day also.

And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken [[Isa. 32:3](#)].

In other words, there will be spiritual understanding given to all of God's people. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face . . ." ([1Cor. 13:12](#)). True spiritual values will then be ascertained and made obvious. And that which should have top priority will have top priority. In our day moral values are gone. One of the great problems in this country is that we have lost the sense of moral values. For many years now our schools have been teaching the evolutionary theory which makes man an animal. Moral values are not taught. If you advocate law and order and a high state of morality, you are considered a square, a back number, and somehow not as smart as are the sophisticated and clever crooks. Therefore, the feeling is, "Let's not listen to that old stuff." Well, the "old stuff" is going to be the future stuff also, because the earth will have a King reigning in righteousness. Then the moral values will come back into place.

The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful [[Isa. 32:5](#)].

I love this -- it is about as up to date as we can get. We have today what are known as the limousine liberals. The rich, for the most part, are liberal. Why? They already have their wealth which is not being taxed, but the middle man is being taxed unmercifully to pay for new projects that the rich are promoting. You can be sure of one thing: the rich man could afford to be liberal. Lazarus sat on the floor and caught the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. That rich man was liberal -- he was very liberal with his crumbs -- but that was all.

In our day a "vile person" is called liberal. In that day a vile person will no longer be called liberal, because he will be seen for what he really is. He is a villain, and his heart will work iniquity. The human heart is desperately wicked. Everything in that future day will be seen in its true colors. There will be no false values. Every man will be seen for what he is. There will be no "putting on a front" or assuming what they are not. The mask of hypocrisy will be removed. This, of course, applies to everyone -- not only to Christians. The biggest hypocrites are actually not in the church. They are all those who pretend to be something they are not.

All of this will take place when the King comes who will reign in righteousness.

The Preceding Time Of Trouble (32:9)

Before Christ, the King, comes to reign, there will be a time of trouble, which will be the Great Tribulation.

Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech [[Isa. 32:9](#)].

Why does he say this? Because naturally women are more sensitive than men, and they sense danger before a man does. My friend, every man before he goes into business partnership or any kind of partnership should let his wife meet the person who is to be his partner. She is apt to give him a true evaluation of his nature and character. In my home I try to maintain my place as the head of the house, but I have discovered over a period of years that I am no judge of human character. Time after time my wife has said to me, "Well, you misjudged that person." Either I put confidence in someone when I should not have, or I failed to recognize that certain people are really wonderful folk. So I have

learned that the best thing to do is to listen to her, especially in the evaluation of character. Now God says that in the days prior to the Tribulation period women will become so insensible that they will not recognize the danger that is coming. It is quite interesting that there will be women living in pleasure in that day to such extent that they will have no sense of coming judgment.

The Promise Of The Spirit (32:15)

Now we come to the third division: the promise of the Spirit to be poured out in the last days.

Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest [[Isa. 32:15](#)].

Here is a case where you need to pay attention to the development of prophecy in the Word of God. When will the Spirit be poured out? The Spirit will be poured out during the Millennium when Christ reigns. That is going to be the greatest time of spiritual blessing and turning to Christ, for at that time He will be reigning in person. That doesn't mean that every knee is going to bow to Him at that time. Every knee will bow to Him eventually, but the Kingdom will be a time of testing. Joel mentions it: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" ([Joel 2:28-29](#)). This looks forward to the coming Kingdom. This prophecy was not fulfilled at Pentecost nor any time since then.

In [Acts 2:15-21](#) Peter quotes from [Joel 2:28-29](#) and explains the passage. Peter did not say that Pentecost was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel, but that Pentecost was similar to what Joel described. The people who were filled with the Holy Spirit in Peter's day were ridiculed as being drunk early in the morning. Now that could happen in Los Angeles today, but people did not get drunk in the morning in Peter's day. Peter was saying that what was happening at Pentecost was similar to what would take place during the millennial Kingdom.

What Joel and Peter described will take place during the Kingdom Age when the Lord pours out His Spirit upon all flesh. On the Day of Pentecost it was poured out on only a few people, but it was similar to that which will occur during the Millennium.

Joel's prediction was of tremendous phenomena: "And I will shew wonders in the heavens and the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come" ([Joel 2:30-31](#)). My friend, these tremendous signs have never yet taken place.

Notice also that Joel predicted, ". . . and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams . . ." ([Joel 2:28](#)). Today our young people are not fulfilling this prophecy, and our old men are in a retirement place playing golf. These things did not happen on the Day of Pentecost, neither are they happening today. This prophecy looks forward to the coming Kingdom. There is always a danger of pulling out a few verses of Scripture and trying to build on them a system of prophecy. We are just to

let the Word of God speak to us -- line upon line and precept upon precept -- as He wants to do it. This is the way God gives it to us.

Chapter 33

THEME: The final woe is pronounced on all who spoil God's people and land.

This chapter, in particular, pronounces a judgment upon those who seek to destroy God's people and lay waste His land. It refers to the Assyrians in the immediate purview but extends to the final enemy of the last days. The chapter is geocentric. The land is the thing of primary importance.

Prayer Of The Remnant For Deliverance (33:1-2)

Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee [[Isa. 33:1](#)].

This is Isaiah's way of expressing the great spiritual principles, which God put down from the time man sinned. It is stated well in [Galatians 6:7](#): "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The "spoiler" here is Sennacherib who came against Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah ([Isa. 36](#) -- [Isa. 37](#)). I believe this is the unanimous conclusion of all sound scholars. However, it does not limit this chapter to the Assyrians. God says in effect, "You spoil My people, and I'll spoil you." God promises to take vengeance on behalf of His people. For this reason we as believers should always let God handle all of our revenge. God says that we are not to avenge ourselves, but He will repay. Turn it over to God. He can do a better job than we can do.

Now this is also a picture of that final day of consummation after God has brought together again the restored Roman Empire, and Antichrist will destroy the land of Israel again. God will take care of him at the second coming of Christ.

Now in view of that, we hear this prayer:

O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble [[Isa. 33:2](#)].

This is the prayer of the godly remnant then and in the future.

Plaintive Cry Of Ambassadors Who Failed (33:7-8)

Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.

The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man [[Isa. 33:7-8](#)].

You would think that we would have learned a lesson today, but we have not. A great peace conference was held at the Hague; and, while it was going on, Germany began World War I and broke all of the treaties. At the end of that war the League of Nations was formed; and, when President Woodrow Wilson went to be our representative, the idea was to make the world safe for democracy. What they forgot, however, was to make democracy safe for the world. Peace didn't come. It led to World War II. Now the United Nations is making the world ready for World War III. We talk about peace, but we are not doing it God's way.

Petition For All To Consider God's Dealings (33:13-15)

Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might [[Isa. 33:13](#)].

Two groups of people are addressed here: "Ye that are far off" are the Gentiles, and "ye that are near" are the people of Israel. The call is to recognize God.

The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? [[Isa. 33:14](#)].

"Sinners in Zion" are those of Israel who are not Israel. There are godless Israelites just as there are godless Gentiles.

"The devouring fire" does not refer to the lake of fire mentioned in the Book of Revelation, but rather to the fact that "our God is a consuming fire" (see [Heb. 12:29](#)). He is a holy God, and He intends to judge in that day.

Today there is a tremendous godless movement abroad. It is growing by leaps and bounds. That is the reason we are giving out the Word of God. We don't know how much longer we can do it, but we are going to continue as long as the Lord allows. God is going to bring judgment, and God's people need to be concerned about getting His Word out. Judgment is not a pretty subject. It is not one that will make friends, but these are the words of Isaiah, and Isaiah's message is God's message, and He would like the human family to hear it.

He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil [[Isa. 33:15](#)].

The one who has been declared righteous by his faith in Christ is called to walk in righteousness. In that awful day we find that where sin abounds, grace will much more abound.

Praise To God For Final Deliverance (33:20-24)

Now we come to the fourth division, where there is praise to God for final deliverance.

Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby [[Isa. 33:20-21](#)].

Babylon could boast of the Euphrates River, Assyria could boast of the Tigris and upper Zab, and Egypt could boast of the Nile, but Jerusalem was a landlocked city with neither river nor harbor. However, Zechariah gave an amazing prophecy which leads us to believe that God will provide a harbor for Israel during the Millennium (see [Zech. 14:4-8](#)). It is my understanding that the earthquake he describes will open up a deep valley to the Mediterranean Sea, and Jerusalem will be a seaport town during the Millennium.

The literal fulfillment of the prophecy also has a spiritual application. "The glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams." The Lord Himself is the source of Israel's defense and blessing.

And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity [[Isa. 33:24](#)].

This is a glorious prospect which is held out for Jerusalem. The eye of faith looks beyond the immediate hard circumstances to the glorious prospect of the future. This is the day when the King will be in Jerusalem. The Prince of peace will then bring peace to the earth.

Chapter 34

THEME: The final world clash -- the Battle of Armageddon

This chapter brings to an end the section which in my outline I call the "Kingdom, Process, and Program by which the Throne is Established on Earth." Judgment has been the theme all the way through this section. We have looked at six woes and followed a progression in this matter of prophecy. We saw a local situation into which Isaiah spoke and then watched him move into that broader area, as he looked down through the centuries to the time of judgment that was coming in the future, which the Lord Jesus called the Great Tribulation. Beyond that we saw the coming of the King.

However, in our day we are not looking for the King, we are looking for our Savior. We are "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" ([Titus 2:13](#)). After He takes the church out of the world, those who remain will go through the frightful Tribulation period, which will end with the War or the Campaign of Armageddon.

This chapter is in contradiction to the philosophy of the world. You see, man expects to so improve the world by his own efforts that he will build a Utopia. He plans to bring in a millennium, although he may call it something else. Man thinks he is capable of lifting himself by his own bootstraps. The basic philosophy of evolution (and evolution is a philosophy rather than a science) is that there is improvement as we go along. It is onward and upward forever! Or, as the slogan has it, "Every day in every way I am getting better and better." Man has woven this philosophy into the fabric of life; he thinks we are moving into something which is great and good.

The Word of God also looks forward to a wonderful future for this earth, but it is not the consummation of man's efforts. Everything that man has built apart from God is coming under a frightful judgment. All of man's work is contrary to God and must come into a final conflict. That conflict is set before us here as the Battle of Armageddon. The sin of man will finally be headed up in the Man of Sin who will attempt to bring in a kingdom for himself, and that kingdom is the Great Tribulation period. It can only be ended with the coming of Christ to the earth to establish His Kingdom.

This chapter looks entirely to the future. The Assyrians have disappeared. F. Delitzsch has made this statement, which I think is quite accurate: "We feel that we are carried away from the stage of history, and are transported into the midst of the last things," and these chapters are the "last steps whereby our prophet rises to the height at which he soars in chapters 40 to the end. After the fall of Assyria, and when darkness began to gather on the horizon again, Isaiah broke away from his own time -- 'the end of all things' became more and more his home. . . . It was the revelation of the mystery of the incarnation of God, for which all this was to prepare the way."

Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it [[Isa. 34:1](#)].

In [Isaiah 1:2](#) God called heaven and earth to witness His judgment upon His people Israel. In this chapter God calls only the nations of the earth to witness His final judgment upon the nations.

For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter [[Isa. 34:2](#)].

Observe carefully the words chosen to depict this judgment: indignation, fury, utterly destroyed, and delivered to the slaughter. They are the strongest possible expressions that could be used. The judgment is universal, and it is severe. It is not only the ". . . time of Jacob's trouble" ([Jer. 30:7](#)), but it is the time of the earth's travail. Our Lord spoke of this as a time of suffering that will be unparalleled in the history of the world. The seals, trumpets, and vials in the Book of Revelation all intensify and confirm this. Whether you believe it or not, the earth is moving toward the judgment of God. Instead of a wonderful day coming for sinful man, a time of judgment is coming. As we look around us at our contemporary civilization, everything we see is going to come under the judgment of our almighty God.

Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood [[Isa. 34:3](#)].

This description is to me the most terrible and repulsive in the Bible. I can't think of anything worse than this. It confirms what the Lord Jesus said when He was here and what the Book of Revelation teaches about a coming judgment upon this earth.

I realize that a great many people doubt this, which reminds me of an incident when a tropical hurricane broke on the Gulf Coast several years ago. I traveled along that area

several years later, drove for miles and saw entire sections of cities that the storm had taken out. Even after several years, nothing is there. I also saw places where jungle in the area was absolutely removed. I was told about an apartment house in the area where a group of people were living fast and loose. When they heard the warnings about the storm, they decided that they would not leave. They didn't believe the storm was going to be severe; so they had a big beer bust. Instead of evacuating, they all got drunk. They ridiculed the storm forecast, and they were all killed. You can do the same thing concerning the judgment that is coming on this earth. God says that judgment is coming, and it is coming.

And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree [[Isa. 34:4](#)].

When you see a little leaf fall from a tree, you can attempt to glue it back on the branch, but it won't stay and it won't live. Just as surely, judgment is coming, and you can't keep it from coming. There is only one thing you can do: make sure that you have a shelter. Listen to God and remember that the Lord Jesus is the shelter in the time of storm which is coming upon the earth.

Idumea, Representing All God's Enemies (34:5)

For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment [[Isa. 34:5](#)].

God bathes that sword in heaven -- that is important to see. When you and I take the sword down here, it is for vengeance or some ulterior motive. When God takes the sword, it is for justice and righteousness upon the earth. His sword is bathed in heaven, and it is going to fall in judgment.

Idumea is Edom, and Edom is Esau, and Esau represents the flesh. Esau represents all in Adam who are rebellious against God and His people. God said, ". . . Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" ([Rom. 9:13](#)). God will judge Edom because they are against God, against His people, against His Word, against everything that is right and good.

Intention Of The Lord (34:8)

For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion [[Isa. 34:8](#)].

This is the day of the Lord's vengeance. We will see this again in [Isaiah 63:1-6](#). You can't do anything to stop it, just like there is nothing you can do to stop Niagara Falls from flowing. God says that things have to be made right upon this earth. To make them right He has to put down the evil and rebellious man upon this earth. Many people will not bow to God; but, since this is God's universe, where will they go? He has only one place for them, which is called hell. You may have your own concept of it, but it undoubtedly is lots worse than a place of literal fire. God's Word is inviolable and the Lord Jesus said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all

be fulfilled" ([Matt. 5:18](#)). My friend, it is wise to read the weather report and, when a storm is forecast, to make arrangements to escape it.

Chapter 35

THEME: The blessings of the Millennium, a picture of the Kingdom

As we come to this chapter, we can thank God that the War of Armageddon is not the end of all things. Chapter 35 is a poetic gem. There is a high sense of poetic justice in this chapter which concludes the section on judgment. The fires of judgment have now burned out, and the sword of justice is sheathed. The evening of earth-trouble is ended, and the morning of millennial delights has come. This section closes on the high plane of peace, having been through suffering to peace, through the night to the dawn, through judgment to salvation, through tears to joy in the morning.

The calm of this chapter is in contrast to the storms of judgments of the previous chapter and even those that preceded it. We can say with the writer of the Song of Solomon, the winter is past, and the flowers appear on the earth (see [Song 2:11, 12](#)).

Material Earth Will Be Restored (35:1-2)

First we see that the material earth will be restored and the curse of sin lifted. This is the body of the earth.

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose [[Isa. 35:1](#)].

We are informed today that the deserts of the world are being enlarged each year; they are not being reduced in size. Drought and soil erosion are hastening this process. Today pollution is filling the earth. All of this will be reversed for the Millennium. The smog will be lifted, and the curse of sin will be removed. The familiar and beautiful statement, "the desert shall . . . blossom as the rose" is an apt and happy picture of the earth's future. If you are familiar with the great desert area of the southwestern section of our country, you will be impressed with this statement. This outline was written while we were crossing the southeast section of Colorado where the drought has been so severe and where the vast grasslands have been eroded by sandstorms. During the Millennium all of this will be reversed.

It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God [[Isa. 35:2](#)].

Paul tells us that creation is groaning and travailing in pain (see [Rom. 8:22](#)), while in the Millennium all creation will rejoice.

Men Will Be Renewed (35:3-9)

The bodies of men will be renewed, as will the psychological part of man.

Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees [[Isa. 35:3](#)].

Creation is waiting for us to get our new bodies.

Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you [[Isa. 35:4](#)].

In the midst of the storm of judgment, God's people can rejoice because they will know that God will come and save them. The church has the added hope and joy of never experiencing the Great Tribulation period.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert [[Isa. 35:5-6](#)].

Sickness and disease and all affliction are the result of man's sin. These will be lifted in the Kingdom.

And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there [[Isa. 35:7-9](#)].

What a beautiful picture we have here of the earth during the Kingdom Age.

Members Of God's Family Will Return To Zion (35:10)

Here we see the spirit of earth; that is, man will be renewed spiritually.

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away [[Isa. 35:10](#)].

Can you think of anything nicer than this? This not only includes Israel, but it will include the redeemed who enter the Millennium upon the earth. In [Zechariah 14:16-17](#) we read, "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain."

We can say with that old Puritan, Richard Baxter, "Hasten, O Saviour, the time of Thy return. Delay not, lest the living give up their hope. Delay not, lest earth shall grow like hell, and Thy Church shall be crumbled to dust. O hasten, that great resurrection day,

when the graves that received but rottenness, and retain but dust, shall return Thee glorious stars and suns. Thy desolate Bride saith, Come. The whole creation saith, Come, even so come, Lord Jesus. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God."

Thus ends the first major division of the Book of Isaiah with all the blessing of the Millennium.

Historic Interlude (35:10)

We have come to the second major division of the Book of Isaiah. This section is unlike that which precedes it and that which follows it. This section leaves the high plateau of prophecy and drops down to the record of history. Even the form of language changes from poetry to prose. The first section dealt with the government of God and the method by which God judges. In the last section we will see the grace of God -- salvation instead of judgment. Between these two sections is this historic interlude of four brief chapters. Why are they wedged in between the two major sections of this book? This is a reasonable question which requires investigation and rewards the honest inquirer. There are several significant factors which are worthy of mention.

1. Sacred and secular history are not the same. F. C. Jennings, in his fine work, *Studies in Isaiah*, says, "Divine history is never merely history, never simply a true account of past events." This means that there are great spiritual truths couched in sacred history that are seen only by the eye of faith. The Holy Spirit must teach us the divine purpose in recording spiritual history. I want to note several suggested reasons for this:

a. These incidents might seem trite to the average historian who records great world movements, but events that concerned God's people were important according to the standards of heaven.

b. These chapters note the transfer of power from Assyria to Babylon. Babylon was the first great world empire and was the real menace to God's people. Babylon was to begin the period designated by our Lord as ". . . the times of the Gentiles . . ." ([Luke 21:24](#)).

c. This section is a record of a son of David who was beset by enemies and who went down to the verge of death, but was delivered and continued to reign. In this he foreshadows the great Son of David who was also beset by enemies, was delivered to death, but was raised from the dead, and who is coming again to reign. Hezekiah was only a man who walked in the ways of David, another weak man. Hezekiah lived to play the fool. Our Lord was greater than David, and as the crucified and risen Son of God, He is made unto us ". . . wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" ([1Cor. 1:30](#)). There are other great spiritual truths which are noted in the chapter outlines.

2. The second significant factor in this historic section is that these particular events are recorded three times in Scripture -- [2Kings 18-19](#), [2Chronicles 29-30](#), and here in Isaiah. The fact that the Holy Spirit saw fit to record them three times is in itself a matter of great importance. The records are not identical but are similar. Some scholars think that Isaiah is the author of all three, or at least also of the one in the Book of Kings. Surely the Spirit of God has some special truth for us here which should cause us not to hurry over these events as if they were of no great moment.

3. Three significant and stupendous miracles are recorded in this brief section:
- a. The death angel slays 185,000 Assyrians ([Isa. 37:36-38](#)).
 - b. The sun retreats ten degrees on the sundial of Ahaz ([Isa. 38:7-8](#)).
 - c. God heals Hezekiah and extends his life fifteen years ([Isa. 38:1-5](#)).
4. This section opens with Assyria and closes with Babylon. There are two important letters which Hezekiah received:
- a. The first was from Assyria, which Hezekiah took directly to God in prayer. God answered his prayer and delivered His people ([Isa. 37:14-20](#)).
 - b. The second letter was from the king of Babylon, which flattered Hezekiah and which he did not take to the Lord in prayer. As a result, it led to the undoing of Judah ([Isa. 39:1-8](#)).

Chapter 36 tells about King Hezekiah and the invasion of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Chapter 37 tells about King Hezekiah's prayer and the destruction of the Assyrian hosts. Chapter 38 records King Hezekiah's sickness, prayer, and healing. Chapter 39 finds King Hezekiah playing the fool.

CHAPTERS 36 AND 37

Chapter 36

THEME: Hezekiah and Assyria

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, had come down like a flood from the north, taking everything in his wake. He had captured every nation and city that stood in his path, or they had capitulated to him. Flushed with victory, he appears with the Assyrian hosts before the walls of Jerusalem. He is surprised and puzzled that Hezekiah would attempt to resist him. He seeks for some explanation, as Hezekiah must have some secret weapon. Rab-shakeh, his representative, ridicules all known possibilities of aid. Arrogantly he demands unconditional surrender. The chapter closes with the terms and threats reported to Hezekiah.

Assyria Threatens To Invade Jerusalem (36:1-3)

Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them [[Isa. 36:1](#)].

You will recall that Isaiah began his prophetic ministry when King Uzziah died, and he continued it through the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and now Hezekiah. Hezekiah was one of the five great kings of Judah. During the reigns of these five kings (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah) revival came to the land of Judah. Hezekiah was actually a great king. [2Chronicles 29:1-2](#) tells us, "Hezekiah began to reign when he was five and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done."

Although Hezekiah was a good king, he exhibited weakness when he attempted to stave off the invasion of Jerusalem by bribing Sennacherib (see [2Kings 18:13-16](#)). He stripped the gold and silver from the temple to meet the exorbitant demands of the king of Assyria. It was to no avail, however, as the army of Assyria was outside the gates of Jerusalem. Payment did not help at all. This policy was not something new then, and it is still with us. Our nation, since World War II, has followed a very weak policy. We have used the almighty dollar to try to buy friends throughout the world, and we don't have many friends today. You cannot get friends by buying them. Our problem is that we haven't learned who our real Friend is. He is the One to whom Hezekiah finally had to turn, the Lord God.

And the king of Assyria sent Rab-shakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field [[Isa. 36:2](#)].

Sennacherib did not condescend to come personally, but instead he sent an army under Rab-shakeh. They are parked now outside the gates of Jerusalem, and General Rab-shakeh is attempting to put fear into the hearts of Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem so that they will surrender.

Hezekiah sent out a delegation to meet with him.

Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder [[Isa. 36:3](#)].

Hezekiah sent forth this embassy of three to receive the terms offered by Sennacherib.

Assyria Demands Surrender Of Jerusalem (36:4-20)

And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? [[Isa. 36:4](#)].

Rab-shakeh arrogantly expresses surprise that Hezekiah would even dare resist, and he wants to know about the secret weapon in which Hezekiah trusts. He suggests first of all that it might be Egypt.

Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him [[Isa. 36:6](#)].

The Assyrian host was then on the way to Egypt to capture that kingdom and was incensed that Jerusalem blocked the way. The facts were that Hezekiah had hoped for help from Egypt as had Ahaz his father before him. But Hezekiah wouldn't get any help from Egypt -- Rab-shakeh was right about that.

Then he suggests another possibility:

But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: is it not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away,

and said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar? [[Isa. 36:7](#)].

Next Rab-shakeh asks, "Is it true that you are depending upon your God?" Here is where his lack of spiritual discernment gave him a wrong cue. He says, "Don't you know that Hezekiah had all the high places destroyed?" He thought the worship at the heathen altars out yonder on those hilltops was the same as the worship of the living God in Jerusalem. He thought Hezekiah had destroyed the worship of the people so that they had no gods to turn to.

Many people today have no spiritual discernment. Every now and then someone will write to me or say, "All churches are the same. They are all striving to get to the same place." These people are like old Rab-shakeh. They don't seem to know the difference. When they say that it does not make any difference what you believe as long as you are sincere, they contradict the words of our Lord. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" ([John 14:6](#)).

Now the third possibility suggested by Rab-shakeh reveals the haughty attitude of the Assyrian:

Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? [[Isa. 36:8-9](#)].

There was the slim possibility that Hezekiah was depending on his own resources and manpower to defend Jerusalem; so Rab-shakeh offers to make things just about equal by giving Hezekiah two thousand horses! He, of course, is ridiculing them.

The fourth possibility suggested by Rab-shakeh is the most subtle of all:

And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it [[Isa. 36:10](#)].

He suggests that Jehovah of Israel has sent the Assyrian against Jerusalem and that He is therefore on the side of the Assyrian.

It is interesting to note that in World War I the Germans thought God was with them, and we thought God was on our side. I doubt seriously that God was on either side. In this particular case the true God used the Assyrian to destroy His people, but He is not going to let the enemy take Jerusalem.

Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall [[Isa. 36:11](#)].

Now Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah ask Rab-shakeh to speak in the Syrian language. All this time he has been speaking so loudly in the Hebrew language that the soldiers on the walls

of Jerusalem could hear. He was great at giving out propaganda; enemies always do that. He was yelling out his ideas at the top of his voice so that the soldiers on the wall would get the word to the people in Jerusalem; he wanted to get it past these emissaries. Of course, their protest only caused Rab-shakeh to talk a little louder.

Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?

Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand? [[Isa. 36:18-20](#)].

Arrogantly Rab-shakeh boasts that none of the gods of other people have delivered them. Why should the Israelites expect Jehovah to deliver Jerusalem? He placed Jehovah on a par with heathen idols.

Representatives Report Assyria's Bitter Terms (36:22)

Finally the emissaries bring the word to Hezekiah, the king:

Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh [[Isa. 36:22](#)].

The messengers return to report these doleful words to Hezekiah.

"Clothes" speak of the dignity and glory of man. The saying is that clothes make the man. Well, "clothes rent" indicates humiliation and shame. This is a dejected and discouraged delegation that brings to Hezekiah the message from the king of Assyria.

Chapter 37

Reaction Of Hezekiah To The Report (37:1-4)

Now notice what Hezekiah does when this report reaches him.

And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD [[Isa. 37:1](#)].

His reaction to the report of his messengers reveals a man of faith. In his extremity he turns to God and goes to the house of the Lord.

And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz [[Isa. 37:2](#)].

Hezekiah now sends his messengers to Isaiah the prophet. This is another act of faith. He wants a word from God.

And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth [[Isa. 37:3](#)].

The message to Isaiah is ominous, black, and pessimistic. It is a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy.

It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left [[Isa. 37:4](#)].

He speaks of the Lord as "thy God," not as "our God." Why didn't he say "our God" to begin with? However, he will correct this in his prayer in [verse 20](#).

Encouragement From The Lord Through Isaiah (37:5-7)

So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me [[Isa. 37:5-6](#)].

God gives assurance to Hezekiah that the blasphemy of the Assyrian has not escaped His attention. Likewise, God cannot, nor will not, ignore it.

Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land [[Isa. 37:7](#)].

He would not be killed near Jerusalem but in his own land. This had literal fulfillment, as we shall see. God declares the destruction of Assyria.

Threatening Letter To Hezekiah (37:10-13)

When Rab-shakeh got back to his army, he learned that the king of Assyria had left Lachish and was going to war against Libnah. A rumor came that the main force of the Assyrian army was being attacked by the Egyptian army. Rab-shakeh withdrew from Jerusalem temporarily to assist the main force of the Assyrian army, but to "save face" he dispatched a letter from Sennacherib to Hezekiah saying, "I'll be back!"

The message of the letter was another attempt to shake Hezekiah's faith in God's deliverance.

Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria [[Isa. 37:10](#)].

He repeats the same words of Rab-shakeh.

Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?

Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Telassar? [[Isa. 37:11-12](#)].

Here he goes beyond the former word and boasts that no gods of any nation had delivered their people out of the hand of the Assyrian.

Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? [[Isa. 37:13](#)].

He quotes historical facts that were difficult to answer.

Hezekiah's Prayer (37:14-20)

Now notice the action of Hezekiah -- I love this!

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD [[Isa. 37:14](#)].

When Hezekiah received the letter, he went to God directly and spread the letter before Him. Then follows one of the truly great prayers of Scripture.

And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying,

O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth [[Isa. 37:15-16](#)].

No instructed Israelites believed that God was a local deity who dwelt in the temple -- just a little box in Jerusalem! King Solomon had prayed: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded" ([1Kings 8:27](#)). Every Israelite recognized that He was the God of heaven, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Hezekiah pleads with Him to hear and deliver His people from the threatening Assyrian:

Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God [[Isa. 37:17](#)].

Hezekiah shows God the letter and calls attention to the fact that it is directly against God.

Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries,

And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them [[Isa. 37:18-19](#)].

Hezekiah acknowledges the truth of the letter. There was no need to deny or ignore it. When we deal with God, it is wise to tell Him the truth, especially about ourselves, and not try to conceal anything.

Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even thou only [[Isa. 37:20](#)].

God's Answer Through Isaiah (37:29-34)

God says that He has heard the blasphemy of the Assyrian. Notice how He will deal with him:

Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest [[Isa. 37:29](#)].

Now God gives this word of comfort and assurance to His people.

And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof [[Isa. 37:30](#)].

The primary thought is that the children of Judah would continue on in the land a little longer.

Note the boldness of this prophecy:

Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it [[Isa. 37:33](#)].

If one of the 185,000 Assyrians had accidentally shot an arrow over the walls of Jerusalem, God's Word would have been inaccurate! How wonderful are the promises of God!

By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD [[Isa. 37:34](#)].

This is specific and was also literally fulfilled.

God Destroys The Assyrian Army (37:36-38)

Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses [[Isa. 37:36](#)].

In the morning the men who were stationed on the walls of Jerusalem saw an amazing sight! The enemies they so feared were now lifeless corpses.

So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh [[Isa. 37:37](#)].

Now let's see what happened to the king of Assyria.

And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with

the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead [[Isa. 37:38](#)].

Secular history confirms the fact that Sennacherib was murdered by his sons. It was about this time that the great kingdom of Assyria began to disintegrate and eventually was taken over by Babylon. God had already let Isaiah know that He was preparing a kingdom down on the banks of the Euphrates River, which would be the one to take the southern kingdom into captivity. God knew that though He delivered His people by this tremendous miracle in the days of Hezekiah, soon the day would return when He again would say, "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" ([Isa. 1:4](#)).

Chapter 38

THEME: Prayer of Hezekiah when told he is to die; promise of healing -- miracle of the sundial; Hezekiah's poem of praise

This chapter deals with King Hezekiah's illness, prayer, and healing. It is well to keep in mind that while Hezekiah was beset by the danger of the Assyrian host, he was plagued by a "boil." His deliverance from death must have been prior to the destruction of the Assyrian host. It was while the siege was going on, and the answer to prayer must have encouraged his heart relative to Isaiah's prediction of the coming deliverance of Jerusalem. Hezekiah reigned twenty-nine years. He reigned fifteen years after this event, so his sickness was in the fourteenth year of his reign, and we are told that Sennacherib came up against Jerusalem in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign (see [Isa. 36:1](#)). All of this happened in the same year -- the sickness of Hezekiah and the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians.

Prayer Of Hezekiah When Told He Is To Die (38:1-3)

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live [[Isa. 38:1](#)].

It is interesting the way this chapter opens. We have seen that "in that day" is a technical expression that speaks of the Tribulation and millennial days. This verse does not open by saying, "In that day," but by saying, "In those days." What "days" is Isaiah talking about? He is talking about those days in which he and Hezekiah lived. Hezekiah was sick unto death. He was having trouble with a "boil" that was just about to kill him. On top of that he was having trouble with the Assyrians. There are those who believe that Hezekiah's "boil" was either cancer or leprosy, or something similar. Whatever it was, it was a terminal disease, and his time to die had come.

The sentence of death was delivered to Hezekiah by Isaiah. It is true that this sentence of death rests upon each one of us, although we do not know the day nor the hour. But we do know this: ". . . it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" ([Heb. 9:27](#)). This is a divine date. If each one of us knew the exact time, our life-style would change.

Some years ago I received a letter from a fine young minister who had been told by his doctor that he had cancer and that his days were limited. He sent out a letter to some of his friends, and I was privileged to be included in that list. Here is a brief quotation from his letter so that you might know the thinking of a man under the shadow of death: "One thing I have discovered in the last few days. When a Christian is suddenly confronted with a sentence of death, he surely begins to give a proper evaluation of material things. My fishing gear and books and orchard are not nearly so valuable as they were a week ago." I conducted this young preacher's funeral. And many years later I had the experience of having cancer myself. My doctor told me he thought I had only about three months to live. I can bear witness to the accuracy of the young preacher's statement. It was amazing how certain things suddenly became very unimportant. One of those things was my home. I thought I would not be living in it but a few more weeks, and it certainly became unimportant to me; but where I was going became very important. Well, God had other plans for me, for which I am indeed grateful. I thank and praise Him for each new day He gives to me.

When Hezekiah was confronted with death, what did he do?

Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD [[Isa. 38:2](#)].

We have seen Hezekiah in prayer before when he spread Sennacherib's letter before the Lord.

And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore [[Isa. 38:3](#)].

This is a time when a man can weep. I wept when I was told I was going to die. I am sure the young preacher wept when he heard the news from his doctor. You are bound to weep at a time like that. But Hezekiah also prayed on the basis of his life. This man had a good reputation before God, and under the Mosaic Law this was the accurate thing to do. [2Kings 18:5](#) says concerning Hezekiah: "He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him." Hezekiah was an outstanding man. He was not boasting when he made that claim.

Promise Of Healing-miracle Of The Sundial (38:4-8)

Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying,

Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years [[Isa. 38:4-5](#)].

God did hear and answer his prayer and extended his life by fifteen years. He did it, not for Hezekiah's sake, but for David's sake.

That is not the basis upon which our prayers are heard today. Our prayers are heard for the sake of David's greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In [John 16:23-24](#) the Lord says, "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye

shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (italics mine). You and I can go to our Heavenly Father with our requests in the name of Christ. To pray in the name of Christ means that you are in Christ, and you are praying for His will to be done. It means that it is to please Him. Sometimes He will heal and sometimes He won't. He is the One to decide.

And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city [[Isa. 38:6](#)].

God ties in His deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian with the deliverance of Hezekiah from death. God's answer to one request will encourage the believer's heart that He will answer the other requests. To be honest with you, I have been greatly strengthened in my own faith since God heard and answered the prayers of a host of radio listeners concerning my health.

And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken;

Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down [[Isa. 38:7-8](#)].

God gave him a sign, which was an assurance that He would answer his prayer.

F. C. Jennings (Studies in Isaiah, p. 438) translates the verse like this: "Behold, I will cause the shadow of the steps to return, which is gone down on the steps of Ahaz with the sun, backward ten steps. And the sun returned ten steps by the steps which it had gone down." You see, the translation of "degrees" can also be "steps." Dr. Jennings comments: "We can now transport ourselves in spirit to Hezekiah's palace, and into his chamber. There lies the king, still prone on his couch, but with his face no longer turned to the wall, but joy and hope brightening his eye as he looks out of the window to the gardens, in the midst of which, and in full view, stands an obelisk, or column, with a series of steps leading up to it, and at least ten of these are lying in the column's shadow; for the sun has gone so far down as to throw the shadow over that number of steps. But look again, the once darkened steps are now in clearest sunlight -- 'tis the sign for which the king had asked!"

Hezekiah's Poem Of Praise (38:9-21)

The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness [[Isa. 38:9](#)].

The verses following are a fine thesis on death by one who was very near to it. Many believe that Hezekiah composed [Psalm 116](#) at this time.

Now the question arises: Was Hezekiah right in asking God to extend his life?

The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD [[Isa. 38:20](#)].

At this time there was a great welling up of praise in the heart of Hezekiah. His song of praise to God was evidently set to music and sung.

However, after this experience Hezekiah became rather proud and arrogant. In the Book of Chronicles, which is God's viewpoint of history, we are told: "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem" ([2Chron. 32:25](#)). Here is evidence to the fact that maybe he should not have asked for an extension of life because it led to pride in his life -- he was raised up!

When I became ill, I remembered the story of Hezekiah. I went to the Lord and said, "If you will let me live, I will promise to do your will, and I will continue to get out your Word." That is the reason I have overextended myself in conferences and meetings. I didn't want to let the Lord down. But He has made it pretty clear to me that I should not kill myself by overdoing, since He has extended my life. Now I am trying to be reasonable in what I do.

After experiencing a miracle like Hezekiah did, there is a danger of withdrawing from the Lord. You would think that it would draw one closer to Him, but instead there is a grave danger of getting away from Him.

Was he right in asking God to extend his life? Should he not have died when the time came? There is another consideration which leads me to believe that he should have died when he was so ill. Manasseh, his son, was twelve years old when he began to reign, which means that he was born after Hezekiah's sickness. Manasseh was the worst king who reigned in either kingdom. I consider Manasseh worse than Ahab and Jezebel put together. I think that it was during his reign that the Shekinah glory departed. If it didn't depart during his reign, I can't think of any reason it would depart afterward. Manasseh was very much like Antichrist, the Man of Sin who is yet to come.

In the next chapter we will see that Hezekiah played the fool after his experience in healing.

Now how did God perform the healing of Hezekiah? Did he have Isaiah pray over him? Or did Isaiah lay his hand on him so hard that he fell backward? No. Notice what Isaiah did --

For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover [[Isa. 38:21](#)].

In other words, he did the two things that James recommends: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" ([James 5:14](#)). This anointing is not religious nor ceremonial. The oil is for healing; it is medicinal. And the elders are to pray for the one who is sick. What God said through Isaiah and through James is the same. When you get sick, pray and call for the doctor. God expects us to be sensible.

Chapter 39

THEME: Hezekiah and Babylon

The transfer of the enemy of Judah from Assyria to Babylon is one of the outstanding features of this section. At this time Babylon was a struggling city on the banks of the Euphrates, unable to overcome Assyria. However, Babylon was to become the great head of gold in the times of the Gentiles, and that makes this chapter significant.

This chapter reveals the great blunder of Hezekiah's life and also his human frailty and weakness. It is after the hour of great spiritual triumph that our worst defeats come.

Hezekiah Receives The Babylonian Embassy (39:1-8)

At that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered [[Isa. 39:1](#)].

Merodach-baladan is a meaningless king to us, but his name is full of meaning. F. C. Jennings calls our attention to the fact that Merodach means "a rebel" and baladan means "not the Lord." Behind this king, of course, is Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, and Satan, who is the archrebel against God and is the "god of this world."

These ambassadors brought a letter which flattered Hezekiah. They said, "The king of Babylon has been concerned about you. He heard that you were sick and have recovered; so he sends a gift to rejoice with you."

And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not [[Isa. 39:2](#)].

At this time Hezekiah had not lost very many of the riches that David and Solomon had gathered. He made the mistake of showing his silver and gold, for he was immensely wealthy. We are told in [2Chronicles 32:27-28](#), "And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasures for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels; storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks."

It is interesting how Hezekiah received the embassy from Babylon. They gave him a gift and a get-well card from the king. Instead of taking the letter and opening it before the Lord like he did the letter from the Assyrians, he just put it aside. They had flattered him, and so he gave the visitors the VIP treatment. He took them on a tour of the grounds of Jerusalem. Solomon had cornered the world's gold market, and he had also cornered the market on quite a few other things. All of it was stored away in Jerusalem. Hezekiah foolishly showed this great wealth to his visitors, who went back to their king and told him that when he was strong enough, they knew where he could get all of the gold, silver, and jewels that he would need to carry on warfare.

Hezekiah made a big mistake, and Isaiah heard about what he had done.

Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee?

And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon [[Isa. 39:3](#)].

Hezekiah thought it was wonderful, but Isaiah recognized the danger.

Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them [[Isa. 39:4](#)].

It was a very foolish thing that Hezekiah had done.

Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts:

Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon [[Isa. 39:5-7](#)].

Hezekiah played the fool. He should never have shown his treasures to strangers. Isaiah's prophecy was literally fulfilled (see [2Kings 24](#) -- [2Kings 25](#); [Dan. 1](#)).

Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days [[Isa. 39:8](#)].

Hezekiah's reply to Isaiah is very strange. He said in effect, "I am glad this prophecy won't take place in my day." He was grateful that these things would not come to pass in his days, but what about his children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren? It did take place in their day.

Hezekiah's life was extended for fifteen years. Was it good? It was not good. He lived to play the fool. Three terrible things took place during those years.

This chapter concludes the historic section.

Chapter 40

THEME: Comfort, a message from God; creation, a revelation of God; consideration, a call from God

Chapter 40 brings us to the final major division of the Book of Isaiah. There is a sharp contrast between the first and last sections of this book. The first section was a revelation of the Sovereign upon the throne, while this final section is a revelation of the Savior in the place of suffering. In chapter 6 we saw the crown; in chapter 53 we shall see the cross. The theme in the first section was the government of God; in this section it is the grace of God.

The opening words, "Comfort ye," set the mood and tempo for this final section. The message from God is comfort rather than the judgment which we saw in the first section.

The change of subject matter has led the liberal critic to postulate the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis. Because the subjects are entirely different, they suppose that they were written by different writers -- two Isaiahs. Well, a change of message certainly does not necessitate a change of authorship. The message has changed but not the messenger. Many authors write on subjects that are entirely different. For example, I have a booklet on [Psalm 2](#), which is God's judgment, and one on [Psalm 22](#), which is God's salvation -- two entirely different subjects, but written by the same individual.

In this section of Isaiah the thunder and lightning of Sinai are subdued, smothered by the wonderful message of grace which comes from God.

Comfort, A Message From God (40:1-11)

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God [[Isa. 40:1](#)].

All of the "woes" and the "burdens" of the first section have been lifted because there is now a burden-bearer, One who later on will fulfill everything that Isaiah said about Him. He will be the One to give the invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ([Matt. 11:28](#)). The Lord Jesus Christ lifts burdens.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye" is a sign of yearning from the pulsating heart of God. Our God is the God of "all comfort." That is the way Paul speaks of Him in [2Corinthians 1:3-4](#): "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." The Holy Spirit is called "the Comforter." The Lord Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" ([John 14:16](#)). He is today our Comforter.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins [[Isa. 40:2](#)].

It has been suggested that when there was an indebtedness or mortgage on a house in Israel, the fact was written on a paper, a legal document, and put on the doorpost so that all their neighbors and friends would know that they had a mortgage on their place. Another copy was kept by the one who held the mortgage. When the debt was paid, the second copy, the carbon copy, was nailed over the other doorpost so that all might see that the debt was paid. This is the meaning of "she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins." The sins of Jerusalem were paid for by the One who suffered outside her gates. This is the difference between the dealings of God with His people in the Old Testament and with us in our day. It actually separates Christianity from all pagan religions and from the Mosaic Law. The difference is all wrapped up in that little word propitiation. In the heathen religions the people bring an offering to their gods to appease them, and that is what propitiation means. Many people think that that is what it means in the Bible, that they have to "do" something -- because God is angry -- to win Him over. The people in heathen religions are always doing that because their gods are always angry and difficult to get along with. Their feelings are easily hurt, and they are not very friendly. The fact is that sin, man's sin, has alienated him from God, but it is God who did something. And today God is propitious. You don't have to do anything to win

Him over. Propitiation is toward God, and reconciliation is toward us. God has done everything that needs to be done. Today we are asked to be reconciled to God, not to do something to win Him over. God is already won over; that is what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross. We need only accept what Christ has done. This is the word of comfort for a lost world today.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God [[Isa. 40:3](#)].

All four writers of the Gospel records -- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John -- quote this verse as applying to John the Baptist. Since it appears four times in the New Testament, I'm not going to argue about it. I say that it refers to John the Baptist.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field [[Isa. 40:4-6](#)].

Luke quotes this as applying to John the Baptist.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever [[Isa. 40:7-8](#)].

Man is compared to the grass of the field. The question is, How can there be comfort in being reminded that we are like grass? Hence in California grass is beautiful after the spring rain; but not many weeks later, after the sun has beat upon it for awhile, it begins to wither and die. Man is just like that.

You say, "Well there is no comfort in that!" Yes, there is. Man is faint, frail, and feeble, but the Word of God is strong, sure, and secure. God's Word is our hiding place, a foundation upon which we can rest; it is our sword and buckler, high tower, protection, security, and salvation. In [1Peter 1:23-25](#) we read, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the LORD endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." It is only the gospel that gives eternal life to man who naturally is just a transitory creature on this earth.

Now note the wonderful message --

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice

with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah,
Behold your God! [[Isa. 40:9](#)].

"Good tidings" is the gospel, and the "good tidings" of John the Baptist was "Behold your God!" Until you have seen Jesus Christ as God manifest in the flesh, you haven't really seen Him. You must come to Him as He is -- not just as a Man, but as God, Immanuel, God with us. If He is just a human, He cannot be my Savior; but He is Immanuel, and He is my Savior. How wonderful this is!

Behold the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall
rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before
him [[Isa. 40:10](#)].

Now Isaiah, as he generally does, draws together the first and second comings of Christ. This verse looks forward to His second coming. Actually, the gospel includes both the first and second comings of Christ. We are apt to get sidetracked and put all the emphasis on Jesus' first coming or on His second coming. Well, let's put our emphasis on both comings, which is the totality of the gospel.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs
with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead
those that are with young [[Isa. 40:11](#)].

The Lord Jesus took the title of Shepherd when He came the first time. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" ([John 10:11](#)). He also said, ". . . I lay down my life for the sheep" ([John 10:15](#)).

Creation, A Revelation Of God (40:12-22)

The next verse introduces the section that speaks of the greatness of God as Creator.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and
meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of
the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and
the hills in a balance? [[Isa. 40:12](#)].

Who has done that? To begin with, when you get out into space, you don't weigh anything; so who is doing the weighing today, and where is it going to be weighed? This verse makes me feel like singing "How Great Thou Art"!

Who hath directed the spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor
hath taught him?

With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught
him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and
shewed to him the way of understanding? [[Isa. 40:13-14](#)].

God knows no equal nor is there anyone to whom He can go for advice. Someone has asked the rather facetious question, "What is it that you have seen that God has never seen?" The answer is very simple. God has never seen His equal. I see mine every day.

To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare
unto him? [[Isa. 40:18](#)].

You and I know very little. All we know is what He has revealed in the Word of God, and I don't think He has told us everything. To begin with, we can't even comprehend what He has told us.

Isaiah is contrasting God to idols. "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" Look around you at the pictures of Him. Personally, I don't care for any pictures of Jesus because they are not pictures of Jesus. I don't become very popular when I say this. Stores that sell such pictures and people who are rather sentimental think I am terrible. But, my friend, we don't need pictures of Him. I agree with the old Scottish philosopher who said years ago, "Men never thought of painting a picture of Jesus until they had lost His presence in their hearts."

Now here is the first rather ironical attack that Isaiah will make against idolatry --

The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith
spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains [[Isa. 40:19](#)].

The rich make a very ornate idol. They have a rich god.

He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree
that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to
prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved [[Isa. 40:20](#)].

The poor can have only a crude idol; he whittles out a god from a piece of wood. How preposterous idolatry is!

Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you
from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations
of the earth? [[Isa. 40:21](#)].

It is utterly ridiculous to compare God to some dumb idol.

It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants
thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a
curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in [[Isa. 40:22](#)].

The Old Testament does not teach that the earth is flat; but scientists in the days of Columbus taught this theory. Those so-called scientists did not pay attention to the Word of God in that day, and they missed something. And I think scientists are missing something today. It is clearly stated in this verse that the earth is a sphere, a circle positioned in an even greater universe, and that God's throne is far beyond the penetration of the most powerful telescopes as they search out the limitless vault of space.

Consideration, A Call From God (40:27-31)

In the light of all of this, God calls us to consider.

Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid
from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?
[[Isa. 40:27](#)].

God knows about the difficulties and problems of His people. If you belong to Him, He is able to quiet the storms of life, but sometimes there are lessons for His own to learn in the storm. When you find yourself in the midst of a storm, instead of sitting and weeping and

criticizing God, why don't you look around and find out what lesson He wants you to learn? God will not let you go through trials unless He has something for you to learn.

The lesson may be this:

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding [[Isa. 40:28](#)].

We have a great God. He never gets tired. He is not like man.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint [[Isa. 40:30-31](#)].

There are three degrees of power here, and several expositors have likened them to the three stages of Christian growth that you have in [1John 2:12-14](#). These three stages of growth are: (1) the young Christian shall mount up as an eagle; (2) the adult Christian shall run; and (3) the mature Christian shall walk.

This reminds me of the black preacher down in my southland who preached a very wonderful sermon, in which he said, "Brethren, this church, it needs to walk." And one of the deacons said, "Amen." He continued, "Brethren, this church needs to run." And the deacon said, "Hallelujah." Then he said, "Brethren, this church needs to fly." And this deacon said, "Amen and hallelujah." Then the minister said, "Well, it's going to cost money to make this church fly." To this the deacon replied, "Let her walk, brother, let her walk."

My friend, regardless of who you are, if you are going to move with God through this earth, it will cost you something. But God will furnish you strength whatever your condition. If you need strength to walk, He will give it to you. If you need strength to fly, He has that for you also. This is a wonderful chapter revealing the comfort of God as our Creator, as our Savior, and as our Sustainer.

Chapter 41

THEME: God overrules individuals; God invites Israel to trust Him; God overturns idols

This chapter continues the thought of chapter 40 in setting forth the greatness of God. The emphasis here is not upon God as Creator so much as upon His dealings with man. The greatness of God is revealed in both creation and human history.

There are also some things in this chapter that are rather enigmatic. It seems that there is a bare profile of prophecy in the background, but the theme is that God will protect and lead His children through the world which is fraught with pitfalls and dangers. Therefore, comfort is here for the child of God.

God Overrules Individuals (41:1-6)

Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment [[Isa. 41:1](#)].

The whole world of individuals is moving toward judgment.

The showdown is coming between light and darkness, between God and mammon, between faith and unbelief. God is now calling upon individuals to turn to Him and accept the salvation He has to offer. God is propitious. He is not demanding anything of you. He is simply asking you to accept the grace and salvation that He has to offer.

Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow [[Isa. 41:2](#)].

"Righteous man from the east" is a strong expression. There are those who feel that this is a veiled suggestion of Cyrus. Cyrus will be mentioned by name shortly, but this is not the place. I believe that the word actually refers to a quality -- righteousness -- rather than to a person. It could be a reference to the rule of righteousness which Christ will establish at His return to earth. We find this thought developed in this section.

They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage [[Isa. 41:6](#)].

Since God is coming to right the wrongs and relieve injustices, individuals who are right with God can be of good courage. There is hope for the little man who trusts God. He doesn't have to worry about the future.

God Invites Israel To Trust Him (41:7-14)

Here again we have a reference to idolatry.

So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved [[Isa. 41:7](#)].

In an emergency some folk hammered themselves out a god, that is, a temporary idol. But now God says:

But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend [[Isa. 41:8](#)].

God now turns to Israel to comfort them in their distress. God says, "Instead of hammering out an idol, why not turn to Me?" After all, He knows they are sinners. He still calls them Jacob, and Jacob was the crooked one. It is God who made him Israel, a prince with God. And God wants to do that for the sons of Jacob.

Abraham is called the "friend" of God, and God wants to bring these people into a right relationship with Himself.

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness [[Isa. 41:10](#)].

This verse has been a real pillar of strength and a source of comfort to God's children of every age.

As he moves on, he says that if they oppose God it will be the very height of folly because they are moving toward the day when all these adjustments will have to be made.

Now note this remarkable verse:

For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee [[Isa. 41:13](#)].

Here is God's gracious overture to trust Him -- what comfort! God wants to take us into His confidence. He wants to enable us to walk with Him, have fellowship with Him, and know Him. My, what mankind is missing today! Some people can even get so involved in church work that they miss all this.

Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel [[Isa. 41:14](#)].

You may think you are something, but you are a "worm" -- a nobody. It is only God who can make any of us important. Only God can make man a somebody. Little man frets and struts across the stage of life, as Shakespeare put it. He huffs and puffs like the old wolf around the little pigs' houses. Where is man going, and exactly what is he getting out of what he is doing? Some people see the futility of it all and take their own lives. Where else can they turn? The only place man can turn is to God. Oh, what man is missing! God's fellowship, His salvation, His goodness, His grace -- all of these are yours if you but turn to Him.

Then He talks to them about the material blessings of the Millennium -- they will be there. And God would like to talk to you and me about the spiritual blessings which are available to us now and those we will have in eternity.

God Overturns Idols (41:21-29)

Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob [[Isa. 41:21](#)].

This is a challenge to idolatry. Now who is an idolater? Have you ever considered the possibility that you may be? Anything you put between your soul and God is your idol -- regardless of what it is. It is anything to which you are giving your time and your energy; it could actually be your religion. Anything that you allow to take the place of a personal relationship with God is your idol.

What can idols do? Can they explain the origin of the universe? Are you satisfied today with the explanations that evolution has given? Of course there have been several explanations, but God says, "Bring them all out."

Let them bring forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come [[Isa. 41:22](#)].

Man doesn't know his beginning or the origin of the universe. He simply doesn't know -- I don't care what theory he is following. I predict that the evolutionist will be embarrassed in the next fifty years or so because evolution will be just one of the many theories which will be left along the highway of time with the other wreckage. There have been many explanations of the origin of the universe which were called scientific at one time but are exploded today. Evolution will be exploded in time. Then man will turn to another theory. Man doesn't know his origin, and he doesn't know the future. Man is a very ignorant creature. Have you ever stopped to think how little you know?

There are many Ph.D.'s who don't know very much either. I heard of a man working on his Ph.D. who was studying the eye of the mosquito. Now there is an unusual subject! One day as he was doing his research, it suddenly occurred to him that he did not want to spend the rest of his life looking a mosquito in the eye. And I can understand that -- I wouldn't mind taking one or two looks, but after that I think it would become monotonous! This man came to the conclusion that he should do something else. He found the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, was granted his degree, and he decided to dedicate his life to something worthwhile. Today he is a minister of the gospel.

It is quite interesting that man can be very well-educated, even have his doctor's degree, and still know very little. He knows nothing about his origin or where he is going, and no idol can give him that information. So it is well to turn to the One who does have the answers. This doesn't mean He will give you all the answers, but it is nice to know Him who knows the answers. I have never learned much about science, but I did learn a motto that was posted in the science building of the college I attended, which read: "Next to knowing is knowing where to find out." Now there are many things I don't know, but I know the One who knows everything. If there is something I need to know, God will tell me.

Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you [[Isa. 41:24](#)].

Man cannot explain his past, and he does not know his future apart from God. That makes all of man's effort apart from God a very vain thing, an empty thing. During my first pastorate a man came to me and said, "If you can't give me a good reason for living, I am going to solve all of my problems by taking my life." What do you do with a man like that? He had an old, rusty .45; it was a big old gun. I said to him, "Now look, if you can show me you can solve your problems by taking your life, I will get you a better gun than the one you have so you can do it right. Candidly, if you are not going to turn to Christ -- if you are not going to bring Him into your life -- you might as well use your gun. I see no reason why you shouldn't." Well, he was really taken aback. He expected me to give him arguments on reasons for living. That fellow put down his gun and left. Although he didn't turn to Christ at that time, he did later on. And he found that Christ had the answer to his problems.

Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion [[Isa. 41:29](#)].

"Confusion" is the end result of idolatry or any philosophy which is anti-God or atheistic. It does not have the answers to the problems of life. These man-made systems cannot satisfy the human heart. The answer is found in the One who brings good tidings of great joy.

Chapter 42

THEME: The Servant of Jehovah -- Jesus; the scourge of idolatry -- images; the servant of Jehovah -- the nation

In each chapter Isaiah is gradually working up to his condemnation of idolatry.

We find in this chapter that the nation Israel is called the servant of Jehovah. Also, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Servant of Jehovah and is so called in the Gospel of Mark. He made it very clear: "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" ([Mark 10:45](#)). And in [Matthew 12:17-21](#) there is an application of this prophecy to the Lord Jesus.

The Servant Of Jehovah -- Jesus (42:1-7)

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles [[Isa. 42:1](#)].

"Behold" is a word that is a bugle call to consider the Lord Jesus Christ.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth [[Isa. 42:3](#)].

This verse characterizes the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus when He was here. "A bruised reed shall he not break." The Lord didn't move in with a club against sin. He simply let sin bring its own judgment. "The smoking flax shall he not quench" -- the man who keeps on in sin will find that it will break out in flames finally. The wages of sin is death; it always is that. You can't change it.

This is a marvelous section as it presents the Lord Jesus as God's Servant.

I the LORD called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house [[Isa. 42:6-7](#)].

Christ performed these miracles as credentials of His Kingship when He was here the first time. He came as the Light of the world. As old Simeon prophesied, "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" ([Luke 2:32](#)).

The Scourge Of Idolatry -- Images (42:8-17)

Now Isaiah begins God's polemic against idolatry.

I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images [[Isa. 42:8](#)].

God will not share His glory with another.

Now he talks about the scourge of idolatry, and the judgment of God which it will bring.

I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools [[Isa. 42:15](#)].

The physical earth will be affected by His judgment.

And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them [[Isa. 42:16](#)].

This is the way God leads His own. You and I are blind to the future, but He is not, and He will lead all who put their trust in Him.

They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods [[Isa. 42:17](#)].

The idolaters, you see, are warned that judgment is coming.

The Servant Of Jehovah -- The Nation (42:19-25)

Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD's servant? [[Isa. 42:19](#)].

He identifies the blind servant here as His own people Israel.

This is God's condemnation of His own people --

But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore [[Isa. 42:22](#)].

The nation Israel is the subject in this verse. They are "a people robbed and spoiled." Why? Because they turned away from God, and they have turned to idols.

Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law [[Isa. 42:24](#)].

The people and nation are identified as Israel. God scattered them -- but He will also regather them.

Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he

knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart [[Isa. 42:25](#)].

The chastening of the Lord did not cause the nation to repent and return to Him. Did this thwart the purposes of God? The answer, of course is no, as we will see in the following chapter.

CHAPTERS 43 AND 44

Chapter 43

THEME: Retrospect -- creation, redemption, preservation of Israel; Prospect -- future judgment, deliverance, redemption of Israel; promise of the Spirit; polemic against idolatry; prophecy concerning Cyrus

This section of Scripture, particularly chapter 43, reveals that God is not through with the nation Israel. It is tantamount to unbelief to deny that God has a future purpose for the nation of Israel. In the New Testament Paul asks the question, "... Hath God cast away His people?" And the answer is, "God forbid . . ." ([Rom. 11:1](#)). That is a very dogmatic answer. God is not through with these folk, as He makes clear in the chapter before us.

Retrospect -- Creation, Redemption, Preservation Of Israel (43:1-12)

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine [[Isa. 43:1](#)].

This statement is as clear-cut as it could be. God addresses the nation Israel in this entire section, and I do not think you could misunderstand Him unless you deliberately wanted to misunderstand.

He speaks of their origin: "the LORD that created thee." God took a sad specimen like old Jacob, whose name means "crooked" -- he was a supplanter -- and made a nation out of him.

God took the dust of the ground, breathed into it the spirit of life, and it became a living human being. And that human being rebelled, but now God makes sons of God out of those who will trust Christ. That is my beginning, and it was a very bad beginning. I don't accept the evolutionary theory that I evolved from a monkey; I came from something worse than a monkey! I came from a rebellious sinner who on the physical side had been taken from the ground. That first man passed on to me a fallen nature which will never be reformed or repaired. But God has given me a new nature.

Beginning with Jacob, God created a nation. Then He redeemed them from Egypt by blood and power, and they became Israel, a prince with God. They belong to God because of creation and because of redemption.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee [[Isa. 43:2](#)].

This is a promise which specifically applies to Israel and the manner in which God delivered them in the past, for example, when they crossed the Red Sea and the Jordan River.

It also has a marvelous spiritual application for all of God's children in all times. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." Sometimes in my experience I get into what I could call "deep water" when I can't touch bottom. But I have the assurance that God is going through the experience with me. I think I'm going to drown, but He has promised, "they shall not overflow thee," and He intervenes and delivers me.

For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee [[Isa. 43:3](#)].

He does not lower His high standard in salvation. How could God give Egypt and Ethiopia ransom for Israel? The answer is simple. God says in effect, "I used these nations to discipline you. I gave them, that is, I permitted them to treat you as they did, and now I will judge them."

In [Proverbs 21:18](#) we read, "The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright." Have you ever wondered why God permitted the enemy to cross your path and cause you all the trouble he did? He did it in order to bring you into line and in order to develop you spiritually. God gave him for your deliverance. [Proverbs 11:8](#) says, "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead." God has let several people really mistreat me, and I talked to Him about it. I thought God was treating me wrong, but I noticed that the Lord paddled these individuals, and I must confess that I was rather satisfied about it. The Lord used these people to straighten things out in my life, and then He straightened them out.

Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life [[Isa. 43:4](#)].

We cannot imagine how much God loves Israel. We cannot imagine how precious we are to God.

Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth [[Isa. 43:5-6](#)].

God states in clear-cut language that He will regather the nation Israel. In [Jeremiah 31:10](#) He reaffirms this: "Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock." God says, "Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations." What He means is this: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye liberals. Hear the word of the Lord, ye amillennialists, and ye postmillennialists, and ye premillennialists -- some of you haven't been quite sure whether or not I am through with Israel." We are to listen to Him. Regardless of what the world situation might be, God says He intends to regather Israel. We have His word for it.

Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me [[Isa. 43:10](#)].

God has no competitor or equal. He alone is God. He alone holds this unique position.

I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour [[Isa. 43:11](#)].

It is interesting that of all the religions of the world only Christianity guarantees salvation. Others put down quite a program, but they certainly do not guarantee salvation. God says, "Beside me there is no saviour."

God now opens up the subject of idolatry.

I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God [[Isa. 43:12](#)].

God is saying, "As long as you will not go into idolatry or turn to that which will lead you away from Me, I will bless you."

Prospect -- Future Judgment, Deliverance, Redemption Of Israel (43:13-28)

Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it? [[Isa. 43:13](#)].

The word let in this verse means to hinder. No creature can slip out of the hand of God or escape out of His reach.

Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships [[Isa. 43:14](#)].

The ultimate destruction of Babylon is foretold.

I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King [[Isa. 43:15](#)].

Surely it is inescapable that the nation Israel is the subject. God takes responsibility for bringing them into existence. Let every anti-Semite take note of this. He is their King. This is another affirmation of the deity of Christ, for He is their King. When the Lord Jesus came to earth and made His claim to Kingship, Israel knew that He was claiming to be Immanuel, ". . . God with us" ([Matt. 1:23](#)). The instructed Israelite understood that.

We have seen that God claims Israel because He created them. Now He speaks of the fact that even the beasts of the field honor Him.

The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen [[Isa. 43:20](#)].

I have a notion that even the animal world is a little more conscious of God than His creature man, who has fallen into sin.

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins [[Isa. 43:25](#)].

God is saying that He intends to forgive them on the same basis that He has forgiven us.

Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me [[Isa. 43:27](#)].

This evidently is a reference to Abraham. Surely Scripture records his failures and sins. We have only to mention the matter of his lying to Pharaoh about Sarah, his wife.

Thy teachers means "interpreters." Those who interpreted God to the people had faults and sins. Remember Samson, Samuel, and David.

Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches [[Isa. 43:28](#)].

This is the present condition of Israel. They have no peace today because they have departed from the living and true God.

This is not, however, their final state.

Chapter 44 continues the theme of chapter 43. However, the last chapter closes with the dark mention of coming judgment. This chapter moves into the light of the coming Kingdom and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

There is in this chapter a brilliant and bitterly devastating satire against idolatry. This is the recurring theme of this particular section. The human heart has a way of turning from God to some idol. Today, we do not go after graven images, but anything to which a person gives himself instead of the true God is an idol. It can be a career, the making of money, seeking for fame, pleasure, sex, alcohol, self-adoration, or business. These are our idols, O America! The high point of the prophet's polemic against idolatry will come in chapter 46. There we shall have occasion to consider this subject further and to examine the real distinction between God and an idol.

Chapter 44

Promise Of The Spirit (44:3)

God calls to Israel as His chosen one and assures her of His help. Then there is this remarkable prophecy of the Holy Spirit:

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring [[Isa. 44:3](#)].

This, I believe, is a reference to the pouring out of the Spirit, which corresponds to [Joel 2:28-32](#). If you read Joel's prophecy very carefully, you will find that it was not fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. When Peter quoted from it, he did two things. First, he said, "this is that" -- he did not say it was a fulfillment (see [Acts 2:16](#)). The crowd there in Jerusalem was ridiculing the disciples because they were speaking in different languages

of the "... wonderful works of God" ([Acts 2:11](#)). The people were accusing them of being "... full of new wine" ([Acts 2:13](#)), instead of the Holy Spirit. So Peter says in substance, "This should not amaze you, because this is similar to what will take place in the last days." Now how do we know it wasn't fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost? There are several reasons: (1) Joel said, "And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood . . ." ([Joel 2:30-31](#)). This did not take place on the Day of Pentecost. (2) The record in Acts tells us that the Spirit was not poured out on all people, but Joel said: "... I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh . . ." ([Joel 2:28](#)). In Acts there were first 120 disciples, then 3,000 believers -- not ever "all," and after nineteen hundred years it still is not all. There were probably a half million to a million people in Jerusalem at that time, but by no stretch of the imagination can anyone say that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled at that time. But the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy is coming in the future. This is the reason I continually say that the greatest days for God are in the future.

Polemic Against Idolatry (44:10-15)

In [verses 9-20](#) we have a brilliant polemic against idolatry. The way the prophet deals with the subject is devastating. Those who make images are witnesses to the senseless character of their gods. An image does not even have the five senses of a human being. An idol can't hear, see, talk, smell, or feel. Paul called them "nothings," and that is what they are. They cannot help anyone.

Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing? [[Isa. 44:10](#)].

The prophet asks the question, "Why do you spend all of your time making a god? You ought to be ashamed. You have everything mixed up. You don't make a god; God made you!"

Now he goes on to describe idol making --

The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint [[Isa. 44:12](#)].

The artificer of metals works hard in forging a god from some metal, but this labor weakens him and reveals that he is but a man. After all of his labor, talent, time, and money that he puts into making a god, what does he get? Nothing! He gets a beautiful little "nothing."

The origin of a man-made god begins in a forest; yet it is God who made the tree to begin with! Only God can make a tree.

Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto [[Isa. 44:15](#)].

The chips and scraps from the production of a god are used to kindle a fire for the man to warm himself and to bake bread. This is the only practical and helpful contribution that

comes from the making of a god. In fact, the scraps are helpful, but that idol is no good to you at all. It cannot warm you; it cannot cook your food; it cannot help you; it cannot save you. An idol cannot do anything for you. God is calling Israel's attention to how absurd idolatry really is.

My friend, many of us give ourselves to those things that take us away from God. They don't help us, they don't lift us up, they don't bring us joy, and it is a fact that they can never save us.

Prophecy Concerning Cyrus (44:28)

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid [[Isa. 44:28](#)].

Keep in mind that this verse really belongs in the next chapter. This is a remarkable prophecy concerning Cyrus. He is named here about two centuries before his birth. He is designated as "my shepherd." This is the only instance where a pagan potentate is given such a title. We shall develop this in the next chapter.

Chapter 45

THEME: Calling of Cyrus before he was born; creation of the universe; continuance of Israel

This chapter continues the theme of the preceding chapter. This chapter begins with Cyrus as the last chapter closed with him. It is rather unfortunate that the final verse of chapter 44 is not the first verse of this chapter, but I am sure you understand that chapter and verse divisions were made of men. It is said that a monk of the Middle Ages marked off the chapters while riding a donkey through the Alps. Each time the donkey came to a halt, he came forward with his pen, and that marked the end of a chapter. Of course, this is a fable, but it looks as if certain places were certainly divided that way. In fact, there are times when I get the impression that perhaps the donkey did some dividing on his own!

Let me repeat the final verse of chapter 44, since it properly belongs here:

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid [[Isa. 44:28](#)].

Cyrus was named and identified almost two hundred years before he was born. This unusual prophecy has caused the liberal critic to construct out of the web of his imagination the figment of "the great unknown" writer of this section of the Book of Isaiah. The fact that Isaiah could name a man two centuries before he appears is too strong a tonic for the weak faith of an unbeliever.

The question is, "Why was Cyrus marked out like this two centuries before he was born?" I believe there are three reasons. Primarily it was for identification. When Cyrus did appear on the scene, there would be no misunderstanding about whom Isaiah had spoken.

Also, Cyrus would be the man responsible for a decree that would return the nation Israel to her land.

Another reason Isaiah called Cyrus by name through the revelation of God was so that his accuracy could be demonstrated. If in two hundred years Isaiah would be accurate about Cyrus, he also would be accurate in his prophecy concerning the One born of a virgin, Immanuel, God with us, who was to come seven hundred years later. The instructed Israelite should have been prepared for Christ's coming.

Notice that God calls Cyrus "my shepherd," and says that he "shall perform all my pleasure" and shall rebuild Jerusalem.

Remember that God used Assyria to take the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity. Then He used Babylon to destroy Jerusalem and take the southern kingdom into captivity. The men God used to do this were wicked, and God judged them for what they had done. But Cyrus is different. God calls him "my shepherd" who shall "perform all my pleasure."

When we get to heaven I believe there will be two things that will be a surprise to all of us: (1) the folk who will be there whom we didn't expect to make it -- and I think Cyrus is going to be one of them, and (2) the folk whom we expected to be there who won't be there. And, my friend, the only reason any of us will be there is because Christ is our Savior.

It is interesting to note that God says that Cyrus "shall perform all my pleasure" -- not only God's will, but also His pleasure. After all, both Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar performed God's will in taking Israel and Judah into captivity, but Cyrus will perform God's pleasure, and that is a little different.

Calling Of Cyrus Before He Was Born (45:1-5)

Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut [[Isa. 45:1](#)].

This is a remarkable prophecy. Cyrus did not appear in the pages of history until two hundred years after Isaiah spoke of him. Cyrus came out of the East, from Persia. The ruins of his tomb have been found in Pasargadae, Iran, and you cannot read the inscription without recognizing that he was a humble man who trusted God. Most of the great rulers of the past were braggarts and most of them were liars. Everything they said you have to take with a grain of salt. The records they left magnified their greatness (sort of like the ones left by modern politicians) and cannot be trusted. But Cyrus was different. He made no great claims; he did not boast, and yet, he conquered the world!

Also note that God calls Cyrus "his anointed," a title that applies only to the Lord Jesus. Why did God give such a title to Cyrus? Because he carried out the will of God and delivered the Israelites from captivity and permitted them to return to the Land of Promise. Also he encouraged the Israelites who did not return to send rich gifts of gold,

silver, and precious things with those who did go back. In that respect Cyrus was a gentile messiah of Israel and a vague foreshadowing of the One who was to come.

"The two leaved gates" is evidently a reference to the numerous gates of Babylon which shut Israel out from returning to Palestine. Cyrus opened those gates and said that the Israelites could walk out. They were free to return to their homeland.

Now God says this of Cyrus:

And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel [[Isa. 45:3](#)].

The rich treasures of Babylon, which the kings of Babylon had taken as spoils of war from all nations, especially from Jerusalem, fell to Cyrus.

For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me [[Isa. 45:4-5](#)].

God chose Cyrus before he knew the Lord. It is reasonable to conclude that Cyrus came to know the living and true God. "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah" ([Ezra 1:2](#)).

Creation Of The Universe (45:7-12)

Here is a remarkable statement relative to the creation of the universe before all time.

God says:

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil, I the LORD do all these things [[Isa. 45:7](#)].

Zoroastrianism began in Persia. It teaches that Mazda is the god of light. God says He creates light, and that it is no god. The Persians were getting very close to the truth. Many have wondered why they worshiped one god in the midst of idolatry. Well, you must remember that they came in contact with the nation Israel, and Israel was a witness to the world. In Zoroastrianism darkness was Ahriman, the god of evil. God takes responsibility for creating the darkness also.

"And create evil" -- the word evil does not mean wickedness in this instance, but rather "sorrow, difficulties, or tragedies" -- those things which are the fruit of evil, the fruit of sin. This is the Old Testament way of saying, "The wages of sin is death . . ." ([Rom. 6:23](#)). If you indulge in sin, there will be a payday for it!

By the way, let me introduce something else at this point, since we are living in a day when it is said that good and evil are relative terms, that whatever you think is good, is good. The argument is put forth: The Bible says "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt not

steal" ([Exod. 20:13, 15](#)). But what is the Bible? Who should obey it? Or why should we listen to the God of the Bible?

The Lord has another very cogent argument. God says that if you indulge in sin, you will find that sin has its payday. It pays a full wage, by the way. This is what God is saying through Isaiah. God has so created the universe that when you break over the bounds that He has set, you don't need a judge, a hangman's noose, or an electric chair; God will take care of it.

He says, therefore, that He is the One who creates light and darkness. He is answering Zoroastrianism which worshiped the god of light. God says, "I want you to know that light is no god; I created it."

Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? [[Isa. 45:9](#)].

Why fight against God? You are going to lose anyway. The Greeks had a proverb that went something like this: The dice of the gods are loaded. That is exactly what God says in His Word. He says, "Don't think that you can fight Me. Settle your case out of court." "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" ([Isa. 1:18](#)).

My friend, don't gamble with God, because when He rolls the dice He knows exactly how they are coming up -- you don't. This is tremendous!

Now the Lord makes some other claims.

I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded [[Isa. 45:12](#)].

It is interesting that God says He "stretched out the heavens." This is no accident. It was Sir James Jeans, a Christian astronomer in Great Britain, who advanced a theory that today most astronomers follow. I notice here in Pasadena that some of the men connected with Cal Tech, who work in the field of astronomy, take the position that you and I live in a universe which Sir James Jeans called an expanding universe. It gets bigger every minute. The planets and worlds and galactic systems are all moving out away from each other. God says, "I stretched out the heavens." That is the way He did it although He hasn't told us exactly how He did it -- or how He could take nothing and make something out of it. Regardless of what theory you adopt, you have to move back to the place where there is nothing and then there is something. If you can tell me how nothing becomes something, then I will listen to you. Until you can answer that, you can talk about tadpoles and monkeys all you want and I'll just sit and smile at you. I'm a skeptic; I don't believe you. Only God has a reasonable answer. God says, "I created it." By His fiat word He brought the universe into existence. Do you have a more intelligent answer than what God has given to us in His Word?

Continuance Of Israel (45:17-22)

This brings us to the third division: the continuance of Israel for all time and eternity. God won't let us forget this subject.

But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation:
ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end [[Isa. 45:17](#)].

Those who believe that God is through with Israel should take a long look at this passage. Israel's salvation is everlasting. God says, "Yes, you are going to be judged, Israel. You are going to Babylon, but you are going to return to the land. Rebellion is still in your heart, but ultimately I am going to save you."

Again He gives them an invitation -- it was wide open then and it is wide open today.

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am
God, and there is none else [[Isa. 45:22](#)].

This is the verse, used by an ignorant man, which was responsible for the conversion of Charles Spurgeon. Spurgeon was on his way to church one Sunday morning when a snowstorm hit London. Because he couldn't make it to his church, he stopped at a little church along the way. The storm was so severe that the preacher did not make it to this little church, so a man got up and said a few words. Spurgeon never knew the man's name; he only knew that he was an uneducated man. He chose [Isaiah 45:22](#) as his text, and what he lacked in lightning, he made up for in thunder. He said, "This verse says, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved.' " He began to talk about the verse. "God says you should look to Him and be saved." By that time he ran out of ammunition. He had said all he could say about the verse, so he went into the thunder department and began to roar and pound the pulpit, "Look to God, all the ends of the earth, and be saved." He looked way back in the congregation and saw the young fellow Spurgeon sitting there with a very miserable look on his face. The man said to Spurgeon, "You look to Jesus, and you will be saved." Spurgeon was a very brilliant man, but he did what this ignorant man suggested -- he looked to Jesus and was saved.

Chapter 46

THEME: Pronouncement of judgment against idols

This chapter contains one of the finest satires against idolatry that is found in the Word of God. It opens with the announcement of defeat against the idols of Babylon in particular. This seems strange since Babylon had not yet come to the front as a world power and was not the enemy of Israel. Nevertheless, Babylon was the source of all idolatry, and it is fitting that after announcing the defeat of the idols of Babylon the prophet proceeds to denounce all idolatry with an injunction to Israel not to forsake the true God.

Pronouncement Of Judgment Against Idols (46:1-9)

Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts,
and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a
burden to the weary beast [[Isa. 46:1](#)].

Bel and Nebo are gods of Babylon. Bel is the shortened form of Baal and is found in the first part of Beelzebub -- which is one of Satan's names. Nebo means "speaker or prophet." When Paul and Barnabas went to Lystra, the people thought Barnabas was Bel or Jupiter and Paul was Nebo or Mercury because he did the talking.

Behind the idols of that day was satanic worship, which is becoming rather popular in our contemporary society. The Word of God repeatedly warns us that our warfare is spiritual warfare.

God contrasts the helplessness of the idol, which is a burden to carry, to His own love and strength.

Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb [[Isa. 46:3](#)].

God says, "I have been carrying you, Israel, as a woman carries a child in her womb."

And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver [[Isa. 46:4](#)].

This is the real distinction between that which is true and that which is false. God had not only been carrying the nation Israel, but He had carried each individual from the cradle to the grave. Let me ask you the question, "Is your religion carrying you, or are you carrying your religion?" God carries our sins. "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" ([Isa. 53:4](#)). He also carries our cares, our burdens: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" ([1Pet. 5:7](#)). And God carries us today: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them" ([Deut. 33:27](#)).

Now notice how He speaks of idolatry:

To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like? [[Isa. 46:5](#)].

The reason that it is so difficult to explain God is because He is infinite and we are finite and live in a finite universe. There is nothing with which to compare Him. He cannot be reduced to our terminology without losing all meaning. He cannot be translated into human language. This explains one of the reasons why God became a man. The only way we can know God is through Jesus. He revealed God.

This is a brilliant satire on idolatry --

They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship [[Isa. 46:6](#)].

This is a metallic image that excels the wooden image in beauty and value. The wealth of man is expended in making an idol. If a man doesn't have much money, he has a cheap god. If he is rich, he has a rich god. It actually amounts to men worshipping their own workmanship, which is self-worship. It is a form of humanism.

Now here is the real test:

They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble [[Isa. 46:7](#)].

They lug their god around on their shoulders and put him in the corner when they get home! Listen to what God says to them --

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me [[Isa. 46:9](#)].

There is a lot of modern idolatry about. Face up to it. Do you receive anything when you go to church? For many folk church-going is a real burden to them. It is like a useless god they have to carry around.

Oh, my friend, God wants to communicate to you. He has something for you. He doesn't want you to carry Him; He wants to carry you.

Chapter 47

THEME: The decline and fall of Babylon

This is the third time in this book (chs. 13 -- 14; 21) that we have considered the prediction of the doom of Babylon. There was also a suggestion of the fall of Babylon in chapter 46, which opened with God's judgment upon the idols. The time given to this subject is remarkable in view of the fact that Babylon at this time was a very small and insignificant kingdom. It was almost a century before it would become a world power. It had been in existence since the days of the Tower of Babel and had influenced the world religiously. Babylon was the fountainhead and the mother of all idolatry. Again I recommend for your study Alexander Hislop's book, *The Two Babylons*. All through the Old Testament books of prophecy a great deal is said about drunkenness and idolatry. These are the two things that will bring the downfall of any nation.

There is a spiritual meaning for us of the present who have nothing to do with Babylon of the past or of the future. The Babylon of the past lies under the rubble and ruin of judgment. Its glory is diminished by the accumulated dust of the centuries. We can see this Babylonian tendency today in the political realm as represented in the United Nations. Babel is the place where all the political power of the world comes together, which will finally be under the willful king, the Antichrist. We see the commercial combine coming to pass in the breaking down of economic barriers among the nations of Europe. We see the religious combine in both Romanism and the World Council of Churches. We will see all of this prefigured in ancient Babylon.

Decline Of Babylon (47:1-3)

Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate [[Isa. 47:1](#)].

"Come down" is the command of God to Babylon, the same as a dog is called to obedience. It is like saying, "Down Rover, down Fido." That is the way God is going to talk to the great world power Babylon when the time comes for it to be brought low. God will say, "Down Fido, down Babylon." That is the way the Lord Jesus dealt with the storm on the little sea of Galilee. When the Lord spoke to the waves and the wind, He literally said, "Be muzzled," like you would muzzle a dog. The same thought is here in Isaiah.

Babylon is called a virgin because she had not yet been captured by an enemy. Babylon was just now coming to power although it had a very ancient history, going back to Nimrod (see [Gen. 10](#)) and to Babel where the Tower of Babel (see [Gen. 11](#)) was located. All the ziggurats in that valley were patterned after the Tower of Babel.

He predicts the tremendous humiliation of Babylon --

Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers [[Isa. 47:2](#)].

This depicts the indescribable humiliation to which Babylon was finally subjected. She had mistreated the people of Israel, and the day came when she was brought low.

Nudity is becoming rather popular today. Men play with the subject like a child playing with a new toy, but it degrades humanity. It was no accident that God clothed mankind. A person who wants to go without clothes has a hangup -- a real hangup. For Babylon nudity was part of her humiliation.

Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man [[Isa. 47:3](#)].

Deliverance Of Israel To Babylon (47:6-8)

Here we see that God delivered Israel into the hands of Babylon --

I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke [[Isa. 47:6](#)].

God is making it clear to them that the reason Babylon was able to take His people was because He permitted it and not because Babylon was so superior. They had a great sense of power, and they gave themselves credit for overthrowing Israel. They were wrong. God delivered His people into the hands of Babylon because they had sinned against Him. He was judging His own people. This is the message of the little prophecy of Habakkuk.

And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it [[Isa. 47:7](#)].

God's judgment of His people deceived Babylon. They thought it was by their might and power that they had taken God's people.

Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children [[Isa. 47:8](#)].

Babylon was arrogant, lifted up, and careless, not believing that a frightful fall was coming. Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, looked over the beautiful and glorious city of Babylon, and said, "This is great Babylon that I have built," giving no credit to God. God sent him out to the field like an ox to eat grass, having a form of amnesia -- probably the psychiatrist would call it hysteria today. For a long time he did not know who he was, and he lived like an animal. It was God's judgment upon him.

Details For The Destruction Of Babylon (47:10)

For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me [[Isa. 47:10](#)].

There is always a grave danger of a nation or a man being lifted up by pride and feeling that he is able to make it on his own. We are living in a country today where men can become rich, not by doing some great service or by making a contribution to mankind, but by being in an industry that brings men down -- degrades them instead of building them up. Think of the millions of dollars that are being made through entertainment and the multitudes who are getting rich through the sale of liquor. We are in many questionable businesses as a nation, and our methods of business are not always honorable. We attempt to cover up these things, but God sees, and He will judge as He judged Babylon.

Dilemma Of Babylon (47:12-13)

Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so thou mayest prevail [[Isa. 47:12](#)].

God satirically urges Babylon to turn to the witchcraft in which she has trusted and which has gotten her into trouble. In substance God asks, "You thought it was so great, why don't you trust it to get you out of trouble?"

Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee [[Isa. 47:13](#)].

Confusion characterizes Babylon at this time. The city lives up to its name -- Babylon means "confusion," and confusion besets them. That great city depended upon its economic strength and its total gross product. But something happened to that nation, and it was dying within. We are living in a country today that depends upon its economic strength, but something is also wrong with us, and we won't face up to it. Our problem is moral. As a nation we have departed from the living and true God. The ancient city of Babylon, which at first glance seems so unrelated to us, has a message for us. The stones of the debris of Babylon are crying out a warning to us.

Chapter 48

THEME: Last call to the house of Jacob; longing call of God to the remnant

All three of these last sections conclude with the phrase, "no peace . . . to the wicked" ([Isa. 57:21](#)). The Messiah brings peace, but those who reject Him will never know peace. Turning to idols is turning from the Messiah. As we have seen, this section has majored in a denunciation of idolatry. Idolatry is a road that leads to Babylon. God, in this book, is traveling the lonely road to Calvary.

Last Call To The House Of Jacob (48:1-4)

Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness [[Isa. 48:1](#)].

There are those who say that Judah and Israel are different, God contradicts that thinking in this verse. Don't try to change the name God has given them. The whole house of Israel is addressed here, and they belong to the chosen line through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The apostate nation back then and in our day should listen to this final injunction to turn back to God. They speak of the God of Israel as though they know Him. Actually, they neither know Him nor serve Him. They have a religion without any strength whatsoever. They will not find the solution to their problems by turning to the United States, or to Russia, or to the Arab nations. Help will come when they turn to God. That is their solution and our solution.

For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name [[Isa. 48:2](#)].

They boast of being citizens of Jerusalem and of being children of God, but they are such only in name; they are actually strangers to God.

Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass [[Isa. 48:4](#)].

From the very beginning, when God took Israel out of Egypt, He knew they were stiff-necked people. My friend, God did not choose them because they were superior, nor did He choose us because we are superior. God chose them and us because of His grace and because He saw our great need.

Longing Call Of God To The Remnant (48:12-22)

He is pleading with His people to listen to Him.

Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last [[Isa. 48:12](#)].

It would seem that God is no longer addressing the nation as a whole but confines His word to the remnant labeled, "my called."

I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous [[Isa. 48:15](#)].

This is the heart cry of God.

Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his spirit, hath sent me [[Isa. 48:16](#)].

It is Isaiah who becomes God's messenger. He is pleading with them, and as He pleads you can hear the Lord Jesus Christ. F. Delitzsch (p. 253) appropriately says, "Since the prophet has not spoken in his own person before; whereas, on the other hand, these words are followed in the next chapter by an address concerning Himself from that servant of Jehovah who announces Himself as the restorer of Israel and light of the Gentiles, and who cannot be therefore either Israel, as a nation, or Isaiah, it can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself."

God has never been able to bless the nation Israel to the fullness of His promise, and you and I have never been blessed as much as God would like to bless us. Whose fault is it? Is it God's fault? No! It is Israel's fault and the fault of you and me.

Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me [[Isa. 48:19](#)].

Then he concludes this section, as the three sections of this last major division of Isaiah conclude:

There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked [[Isa. 48:22](#)].

This is the solemn benediction of this section where God's Servant is set over against all the idols of the heathen. He alone gives peace. If a person is away from God, living in sin, he cannot find peace in the world today. We have several thousand years of recorded history which tell us that anyone away from God hasn't had peace.

Chapter 49

THEME: Discourse of Christ to the world; discussion of Jehovah with Israel; digression -- judgment of Israel's oppressors

In this third and final division of the Book of Isaiah there is a threefold division which is marked off with the words, "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked." We have seen in the first division the comfort of Jehovah which comes through the servant. Now chapter 49 begins the second division, which I call salvation of Jehovah which comes through the suffering Servant.

We are now beginning to move toward a definite revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ as the suffering Servant of God. We have been moving toward that revelation from the very beginning, but at first we saw Him more as a silhouette in the background as the Servant who brings comfort to God's people. The closer we get to chapter 53, where we have that wonderful revelation of the Cross of Christ, the more clear He will become to us.

Israel was the servant of Jehovah, but as such Israel had failed. Now God speaks of another Servant, and that Servant is the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophetic Scriptures spoke primarily of Israel as God's servant; yet the final meaning is found in the Person of Christ. A classic illustration is in [Hosea 11:1](#), where it is recorded: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." This was fulfilled in Christ (see [Matt. 2:15](#)). The nation failed, but the One who came out of the nation will succeed.

Discourse Of Christ To The World (49:1-7)

As we open this chapter, we are listening in on a discourse by Christ as truly as the twelve apostles listened to Him in Galilee. In this chapter we see Christ moving out to become the Savior of the world. In this movement Israel is not forsaken, for her assured restoration to the land is reaffirmed.

There is nothing to correspond to this remarkable discourse of our Lord Jesus Christ in the religions of this world. Here is One who is looking at a world, and He is looking at it as the Servant of God, who has come as the Savior of the world. Every religion is confined to an ethnic group or to several ethnic groups. Generally they do not move beyond the borders of a tribe, a people, or a nation, so that most deities are local deities. However, the Deity in the Word of God is the living God, the Creator of the universe and the Redeemer of mankind. This fact makes the discourse before us remarkable indeed.

Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The
LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my
mother hath he made mention of my name [[Isa. 49:1](#)].

Christ is calling upon the nations of the world to hear. He was given the name of Jesus before He was born, and this name is to be proclaimed throughout the world because it is the name of the Savior, and the world needs a Savior.

And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of
his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his
quiver hath he hid me [[Isa. 49:2](#)].

The sharp sword that went out of His mouth is the Word of God, and the explanation of His enemies when He walked on this earth was, ". . . Never man spake like this man" ([John 7:46](#)). And the revelation of this One concludes with these words: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations . . ." ([Rev. 19:15](#)). It is the judgment of the nations by the Word of God.

Notice the identification:

And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be
glorified [[Isa. 49:3](#)].

This will be true of the nation Israel, and it is true of Christ.

Now this is a remarkable statement:

Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for
nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD; and
my work with my God [[Isa. 49:4](#)].

Though the Lord was rejected, and it may look as if He labored in vain, His confidence is in God. Even the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was a victory; in fact, it is the greatest victory the world has seen up to the present time. The emphasis in this section, therefore, is on the suffering Servant.

At His first coming He did not gather Israel, as they rejected Him. At His first coming He did something far more wonderful -- He wrought salvation for the world. Therefore, God's purposes were not thwarted by man's little machinations.

And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength [[Isa. 49:5](#)].

I submit this to you as being one of the most remarkable passages in the Word of God.

Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee [[Isa. 49:7](#)].

Paul said it like this: "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" ([Rom. 11:12](#)). The rejection of Christ by Israel meant that the gospel went to the ends of the earth. Just think how great it will be some day in the future when God regathers Israel!

Discussion Of Jehovah With Israel (49:8-16)

From this section, the discussion of Jehovah with Israel regarding their restoration, I shall lift out only a few verses:

Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages [[Isa. 49:8](#)].

God heard the prayer of Christ, and He whom the nation crucified will be the One before whom kings will bow, and every knee must bow and acknowledge His Lordship.

Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted [[Isa. 49:13](#)].

God's purposes in the earth center in the nation Israel. When they are back in the land, then both the heavens and the earth can rejoice. Today, however, everything is more or less out of place as far as the world is concerned. Israel should be in their land, in the place of blessing, serving God. They are not. The church should be in heaven with Christ, but the church is still in the world. The Devil should be in hell, but he is walking around the earth seeking whom he may devour. The Lord Jesus Christ should be sitting upon the throne of the earth, ruling the earth, but He is at the right hand of God. There are many things that have to be shifted around and put in the right socket. Then the lines of Robert

Browning as written in "Pippa Passes" will be true: "God's in His heaven: All's right with the world." At the moment, these words just do not fit the world in which you and I live.

Even the people of Israel think they are forsaken of God --

But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me [[Isa. 49:14-16](#)].

What beautiful assurance God gives them that they are not forsaken of Him! Israel may forsake Him -- as they are doing yet today -- but God will never forsake them.

My friend, if you still have doubts that God will restore Israel, I submit this section to you for your careful study.

Digression -- Judgment Of Israel's Oppressors (49:22)

Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders [[Isa. 49:22](#)].

God assures Israel that the Gentiles will assist Him in the final restoration of the nation to the land. Heretofore, the Gentiles have scattered them, which makes this a rather remarkable prophecy even for today. Great Britain did open the land for the Jews; yet Great Britain was the country that issued the mandate which forbade them to enter the land -- so they came by ship without permission, and they have been hindered in one way or another since that time. It has taken persecution to push them out of other countries, and at the time I am writing this they are being blocked from leaving Russia, which probably has the third largest Jewish population in the world. Russia doesn't want to get rid of them, yet it subjects them to a great deal of anti-Semitic oppression. However, in that day, that is, in the end times, God will bring them back into their land, and He will use Gentiles to move them back!

Chapter 50

THEME: The reason for the rejection of Israel: Israel's rejection of Christ. Israel's rejection of Christ is the real hurdle that they must get over before there can be blessing for them. He came as their Messiah; He actually was one of them. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" ([John 1:11](#)). He came to His own people, and His own people did not receive Him.

God The Father States The Reason (50:1-2)

Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold

yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away
[[Isa. 50:1](#)].

Under the Mosaic Law (see [Deut. 24:1](#)) a man could put away his wife on the slightest pretext. A cruel and hardhearted man would take advantage of this to get rid of his wife. God asks Israel if they know on what grounds He set them aside. Certainly God is not cruel or brutal. Israel is spoken of as the wife of Jehovah -- this is the theme of Hosea. It was not a whim of God that caused Israel to be set aside, but God makes it very clear that their sin brought about their rejection.

Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was
there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot
redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry
up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh,
because there is no water, and dieth for thirst [[Isa. 50:2](#)].

"When I came" -- when did Jehovah come directly to His people, not through His prophets but Himself, to Israel and expect such a welcome? It was not when He descended on Mount Sinai to give them the Mosaic Law. He looked for no welcome then, but insisted that they keep their distance. But He came again as a man, a humble man, and there was no reception of Him at all. Israel did not welcome Him at His birth; they didn't receive Him when He began His ministry. They rejected and killed their Messiah. Simon Peter on the Day of Pentecost put it like this: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" ([Acts 2:22-24](#)). God makes it very clear that because they rejected their Messiah, they have been set aside.

God The Son Speaks Of His Humiliation (50:4-6)

The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I
should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary:
he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear
as the learned [[Isa. 50:4](#)].

The title by which Christ, the perfect Servant, addresses God is revealing. It is "Jehovah Adonai." The Lord Jesus Christ made Himself known to His people as "Jehovah Adonai." He came meek and lowly to do the Father's will.

"He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned" means the Lord Jesus was studying the Word of God. The question is asked, What did the Lord Jesus do the first thirty years of His life? Generally the answer is that he worked as a carpenter. But that is only half the truth. The other half is that He studied the Word of God. How tremendous! If He needed to study the Word of God, what about you? What about me? I think we need to get with it!

It is nonsense to say, "Oh, I believe the Bible from cover to cover; I will defend it with my life," when you don't study it! If God has spoken between the pages of [Genesis 1:1](#)

and [Revelation 22:21](#), then somewhere between God has a word for you and for me. If God is speaking to us, we ought to listen.

The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious,
neither turned away back [[Isa. 50:5](#)].

This speaks of the Lord's true submission in His crucifixion. In [Exodus 21:1-6](#) we are told that when a servant wanted to become a permanent servant, his master would bore or pierce a hole in his ear. "Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever" ([Exod. 21:6](#)). He could wear an earring after that, and I am convinced that he did. It indicated that he was a slave for life to his master.

Now the reason he would become a slave forever is twofold. First, he loved his master; and second, he had married a slave girl and he refused to go without her.

Do you see how this was applied to the Lord Jesus? The psalmist, referring to this custom, wrote, ". . . mine ears hast thou opened . . ." ([Ps. 40:6](#)). Now notice how this is quoted in [Hebrews 10:5](#): "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." In the psalm it says, "mine ears hast thou opened," and in Hebrews it says, "a body hast thou prepared me." When the Lord Jesus came down to this earth and went to the cross, His ear wasn't "opened" or "digged"; He was given a body, and that body was nailed to a cross. He has taken a glorified body bearing nail prints back to heaven. He did more than have his ear bored through with an awl; He gave His body to be crucified because He loved us and would not return to heaven without us!

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that
plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting
[[Isa. 50:6](#)].

This was literally fulfilled when Jesus was arrested. Matthew, Mark, and John all record the fact that He was spit upon, scourged, buffeted, and smitten. This is something we don't like to think about and would like to pass over, but it was literally fulfilled.

God The Holy Spirit Suggests Men Trust The Son (50:10-11)

Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of
his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him
trust the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God [[Isa. 50:10](#)].

This is the wooing word. The Holy Spirit speaks a soothing and imploring word to trust and rest in God's Servant.

He turns from this and gives a warning word:

Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about
with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye
have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in
sorrow [[Isa. 50:11](#)].

First it is the wooing word as He implores them; then He gives a warning word to those who walk in the light of their own fire, rejecting the One who is the light of the world.

Some time ago a man said to me, "McGee, I heard you on the radio, and I disagree with you about salvation. Let me tell you what I think about it." Well, he was ready to build a fire, and he wanted both of us to sit there and warm ourselves by his fire. I knew it was a phony fire, which would give off no heat or light. So I frankly said to him, "I don't mean to be ugly or rude, but I don't want to hear what you think, because what you think and what I think are quite meaningless. It is what God says that we need to know." And we need to walk in the light of the Lord Jesus. He is the Light of the World. If we reject Him who is the Light of the World, then we generally walk in the light of our own little fire down here. The Holy Spirit gives this warning: You will lie down by that little fire of yours in sorrow, which means you will be eternally lost.

Chapter 51

THEME: Israel's origin from past history; Israel's outlook for the future; outline of Israel's present conditions

It is impossible to read this chapter without realizing that God has a future purpose for the nation Israel -- just as He has a future purpose for the church and for you and me.

Let me remind you that the final verse of chapter 50 concluded with a warning, which might lead you to an amillennialist interpretation. God doesn't want us to hold the view that Israel as a nation has been set aside permanently and that when He speaks of Israel, He means the church. My friend, when God says Israel, He means Israel. If He had meant the church instead of Israel, somewhere along the line He would have said, "I hope you understand that when I say Israel I mean the church." No, He makes it very clear that He means Israel. Just as Israel has had a past rooted in a very small beginning, just so today they are small and set aside. But this does not mean God has forsaken them.

To illustrate this I use the figure of a train. God is running through the world a twofold program: One of them is expressed in the words, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" ([Ps. 2:6](#)) -- that train will be coming through later, but now it is on the side-track. On the main track He is ". . . bringing many sons unto glory" ([Heb. 2:10](#)), which refers to believers (or the church). When this train has come into the Union Station one time, God will put back on the main track the program of Israel and the gentile nations which are then upon the earth. And He is going to bring that train through on time also.

God's time piece is not B-U-L-O-V-A or G-R-U-E-N, but I-S-R-A-E-L. In this chapter God turns on the alarm to awaken those who are asleep that they might know that the eternal morning is coming soon. In [Romans 13:11-12](#) we read, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

Israel's Origin From Past History (51:1-2)

Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged [[Isa. 51:1](#)].

"Hearken to me," is God turning on the alarm. This is a call to every sincere heart in Israel that longs to be righteous and desires to know God. He says, "Wake up! Hear Me! I have a plan."

Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him [[Isa. 51:2](#)].

God is saying, "I called Abraham when he was over in Chaldea in idolatry, and look what I've done through him! Now I want to move in your heart and life."

Israel's Outlook For The Future (51:4-15)

Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people [[Isa. 51:4](#)].

"O my nation" is Israel. This is a word of glorious anticipation for them.

My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust [[Isa. 51:5](#)].

"My righteousness is near" -- righteousness is Christ. He is made unto us "righteousness."

"The isles" are all the continents which are inhabited by the human family. God says, "I have a salvation which I will send out to them."

"On mine arm shall they trust" -- the arm of God, as we shall see in [Isaiah 53](#), is His salvation. The question is asked, "to whom is the [bared] arm of the LORD revealed?" ([Isa. 53:1](#)). God wants that bared arm of redemption in Christ to be revealed to the lost world. Therefore He is sending out this message that this bared arm will deliver Israel in the future.

Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing, unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away [[Isa. 51:11](#)].

"Zion" is a geographical location (in Jerusalem) on earth. We need to understand that God means what He says here.

The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.

But I am the LORD thy God that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name [[Isa. 51:14-15](#)].

Just as God brought their father Abraham from the ends of the earth, God intends to bring Israel back to the land. This is what the prophet Jeremiah is saying: "But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land" ([Jer. 23:8](#)). The day will come when Israel will no longer remember the deliverance out of Egypt, so great will be their deliverance in the future. My friend, this is

tremendous! You can't just set it aside and ignore it. God is saying, "Wake up! This is what I'm going to do."

Outline Of Israel's Present Conditions (51:17-23)

The present conditions of Israel ought to tell us something. God is still telling us to wake up.

Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out [[Isa. 51:17](#)].

All you have to do is look at Jerusalem today. It is a city in turmoil. I have no desire right now to stay there permanently, although it was a favorite spot of David, and it is also God's favorite spot on earth. But God has yet to make it beautiful. He has yet to bring His people there. God is saying, "Wake up, O Jerusalem. I am going to make you a great city."

Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again [[Isa. 51:22](#)].

God has been pressing the cup of fury to their lips because of their rejection of Christ, but the day is coming when He will remove the cup. The day will come when God will take away judgment and bless them. How can you say that God is through with the nation Israel? Even poetic justice demands that after all these years of judgment upon the land and upon the people, God should bless them. God will get the victory, and that is what He is telling us here.

But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over; and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over [[Isa. 51:23](#)].

The enemies of Israel will not escape the judgment of God. Every nation that has majored in anti-Semitism has fallen: Egypt, Persia, Rome, Spain, Belgium, and Germany. This chapter should alert the believers today that God will yet choose Israel, and that the events in the Near East indicate that we are fast approaching the end times although no specific prophecy is being fulfilled in this hour.

Chapter 52

THEME: Invitation to the redeemed remnant of Israel; institution of the Kingdom to Israel; introduction of the suffering Servant

As we have been moving through Isaiah, we have seen in the shadows or in the background the Servant of Jehovah. Now as we approach chapter 53 we will see very clearly that the Servant of Jehovah is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the preceding chapter, the "alarm clock" chapter, the alarm was going off -- "Awake, awake!" Now again in the chapter before us we have the alarm sounding.

Invitation To The Redeemed Remnant Of Israel (52:1-6)

Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean [[Isa. 52:1](#)].

When God says, "O Zion," He doesn't mean Los Angeles, or Pocatello, Idaho, or Muleshoe, Texas. He means Zion, which is a geographical place in the land of Israel. It is actually the high point in the city of Jerusalem. It was David's favorite spot. Blessing is going to come upon Jerusalem, and it will no longer be an unattractive place. I was not impressed when I saw Jerusalem for the first time. I came up from Jericho and made that turn around the Mount of Olives by Bethany; then I was within sight of the temple area, the wall, and the east gate -- that was a thrill. It was late in the afternoon and a shadow was over the city. I could hardly wait until the next morning to enter the city and visit around. Well, the next day was a great disappointment to me. That city is not beautiful in my opinion. Yet the Word of God says it is beautiful for situation; so that's God's viewpoint. I will agree with Him that the situation of it is beautiful, but not the city. However, He makes it clear here that it will be beautiful some day -- because of our Lord's work of redemption. You see, Christ will redeem this physical universe, which now is groaning and travailing together in pain. All the world will become a beautiful spot because of redemption in Christ. He will redeem our bodies; we will get new bodies, and when this takes place, all creation will be redeemed. Redemption is not only of the person but of the property. This is the type of redemption that God permitted in the Mosaic Law, which serves as an illustration of it.

Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion [[Isa. 52:2](#)].

Today the Arab is there. All the sacred spots are covered with churches -- Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and the Church of All Nations -- they are all over the place! Jerusalem needs to be released from religion. It needs to be turned loose from the sin and the low degree of civilization that is there right now. Release is coming some day, and it will come during the Millennium. For twenty-five hundred years that city has been captive and trodden down of the Gentiles, but the day is coming when the shackles of slavery will be removed.

For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money [[Isa. 52:3](#)].

Since God received nothing from those who took His holy city captive, He will give nothing in return. He will take it from them and restore it again.

For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause [[Isa. 52:4](#)].

Jacob went down to Egypt by invitation, but his children were made slaves. The Assyrians, and others likewise, have oppressed them. That will end when the Millennium begins.

Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed [[Isa. 52:5](#)].

God received no gain from the years of His people's rejection. Therefore He says:

Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I [[Isa. 52:6](#)].

This is a lovely thought! When the Lord was here over nineteen hundred years ago, they did not know Him. If they had only known the day of His visitation! Well, they will know Him when He comes again, and He will say, "Behold, it is I." This expression is rendered freely by Lowth: "Here I am." The world has rejected Christ; it doesn't know Him. One day He will say to the Christ-rejecting world, "Here I am," and it will be too late then for the multitudes who have rejected Him to turn to Him.

Institution Of The Kingdom To Israel (52:9)

Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem [[Isa. 52:9](#)].

One of the things you will note about the present-day Jerusalem is the lack of a joyful song. It is even true of the churches there. I listened for it but never heard a joyful song. Around the Mosque of Omar (which stands on the temple site) everything is in a minor key. If you go to the wailing wall, wailing is what you will hear, and the Jews are knocking their heads against it. But in the Millennium everybody is going to have fun -- they will "Break forth into joy" and they will "sing together." It will be a joyous time!

Even today I don't think God likes to see us saints walking around with long faces, complaining and criticizing. He wants us to have joy. The apostle John wrote, "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" ([1John 1:4](#), italics mine) -- not just a little fun, but fun all the time!

The Millennium is the time when God answers the prayer which our Lord taught His disciples: "Thy kingdom come . . ." ([Matt. 6:10](#)). The tears and the sorrow will be gone; no longer will there be weeping on the earth. Instead there will be joy, and they will know that the millennial Kingdom has come.

Introduction Of The Suffering Servant (52:13-15)

My friend, somebody will have to travail if you are going to rejoice at a birth, a new birth and a new world. Therefore we have here the suffering of the Servant.

Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high [[Isa. 52:13](#)].

Several of the administrations in Washington over the past few years have used the word prudent to excess. They speak of being prudent in their conduct. There is some question about whether they were prudent or not. If you think the Democrats have been prudent, ask the Republicans. If you think the Republicans have been prudent, ask the Democrats.

You will find out that nobody has been prudent. Man today has not dealt prudently; but, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes, He will deal prudently. That is the picture we have here.

"He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." Paul writing to the Philippian believers says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" ([Phil. 2:9-11](#)).

Now we see the suffering Servant --

As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men [[Isa. 52:14](#)].

This is a picture of the crucifixion of Christ, and this statement prepares the way for chapter 53. I want to be careful, because it is not always a sign of orthodoxy to dwell upon the sufferings of Christ upon the Cross; sometimes it is only being crude.

During that time of darkness when men could no longer do anything, the Son of God was working on the Cross. It was during those three hours in blackness that the Cross became an altar and the Son of Man, the Lamb of God, paid for the sins of the world. After the three hours of darkness, the crowd must have been startled when the light broke upon the Cross. He did not even look human -- just a bloody piece of quivering human flesh. It was unspeakable. We will see in the next chapter that there was "no beauty that we should desire him" ([Isa. 53:2](#)). That is the reason God put the mantle of darkness down on the Cross. There was nothing there to satisfy the morbid curiosity of man.

"His visage was so marred more than any man." When I was a pastor in Nashville, Tennessee, there was a wonderful elder on the church board who was a captain in the fire department. He always talked about the importance of having a first aid kit, and he taught classes in first aid. He asked me a dozen times if I had a first aid kit in my car, and because of his urging I finally got one. Early one morning there was a fire alarm and the firemen responded to the call. On the way to the fire, the hook and ladder truck on which he was riding was hit by a milk truck and flipped over. The men riding on it were dragged along the asphalt. I received a call about five o'clock in the morning and was told that he was in the hospital. He was still alive when I arrived, and his father was sitting beside his bed. When I looked at him I saw that his face was so marred that I didn't even recognize him. All I could see was a mouth and I could tell that he was breathing -- that was all. He didn't last very long. In an hour's time he was gone.

Many times since then I have thought of the fact that the Lord Jesus was marred more than any man, which means He had to be marred more than the captain of the fire company. He was just a piece of quivering human flesh. That is what my Lord went through on the Cross!

I don't feel that we should move into the realm of being crude in describing Him, because the next verse says:

So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider [[Isa. 52:15](#)].

"So shall he sprinkle many nations" could be translated, "So shall He make with astonishment many nations." This carries the thought that His death will startle people when they properly understand it. The death of Christ should never become commonplace to anyone. His death was different. We have not explained it properly unless it startles people.

This prepares us for the profound mystery of the next marvelous chapter.

Chapter 53

THEME: The suffering of the Savior; the satisfaction of the Savior

Those who are acquainted with God's Word realize that [Isaiah 53](#) and [Psalm 22](#) give us a more vivid account of the crucifixion of Christ than is found elsewhere in the Bible. This may be a shock to many who are accustomed to think that the four Gospels alone describe the sad episode of the horrible death of the Son of God. If you will examine the Gospel accounts carefully, you will make the discovery that only a few unrelated events connected with the Crucifixion are given and that the actual Crucifixion is passed over with reverent restraint. The Holy Spirit has drawn the veil of silence over that cross, and none of the lurid details are set forth for the curious mob to gaze at and leer upon. It is said of the brutal crowd who murdered Him that they sat down and watched Him. You and I are not permitted to join that crowd. Even they did not see all, for God placed over His Son's agony the mantle of darkness. Some sensational speakers gather to themselves a bit of notoriety by painting, with picturesque speech, the minutest details of what they think took place at the crucifixion of Christ. Art has given us the account of his death in ghastly reality. You and I probably will never know, even in eternity, the extent of His suffering.

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed thro'
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.
-- Elizabeth C. Clephane,
"The Ninety and Nine"

Very likely God did not want us to become familiar with that which we need not know. He did not wish us to treat as commonplace that which is so sacred. We should remind ourselves constantly of the danger of becoming familiar with holy things. "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD" ([Isa. 52:11](#)).

Isaiah, seven hundred years before Christ was born, lets us see something of His suffering that we will not find anywhere else. Before going any further, we should pause a moment to answer the question that someone, even now, is doubtless asking: "How do you know that Isaiah is referring to the death of Christ? Isaiah wrote seven hundred years before Christ was born." Well, that is just the question that the Ethiopian eunuch raised when

Philip hitchhiked a ride from him in the desert. The Ethiopian was going from Jerusalem back to his own country, and he was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. We are even told the very place in the chapter where he was reading (see [Acts 8:32](#)).

When I was a little boy in Sunday school, I was given a picture of the Ethiopian eunuch sitting in his chariot, holding in one hand the reins and in the other hand the book he was reading. Well, with a little thought we would realize that it couldn't have happened that way.

This man was an official of the government of Ethiopia. He was going across the desert in style. I am sure that he was under some sort of a shade as he sat there reading. He had a chauffeur who was doing the driving for him.

As the Ethiopian was reading [Isaiah 53:7-8](#) his question to Philip was, ". . . I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" ([Acts 8:34](#)). How can we be sure that Isaiah was referring to the Lord Jesus Christ in the fifty-third chapter? Listen to Philip. He will answer the Ethiopian's question and our question as well. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" ([Acts 8:35](#)).

Also Christ Himself in [John 12:38](#) quoted from [Isaiah 53](#) and made application to Himself. And the apostle Paul in [Romans 10:16](#) quotes from this same chapter in connection with the gospel of Christ. My friend, Scripture leaves no doubt that [Isaiah 53](#) refers to Christ. Even more than that, it is a photograph of the Cross of Christ as He was dying there.

The first nine verses will tell us of the suffering of the Savior. The remainder of the chapter tells the satisfaction of the Savior.

You will find that these two themes belong together -- suffering and satisfaction. Suffering always precedes satisfaction. Too many folk are trying to take a shortcut to happiness by attempting to avoid all the trying experiences of life. I want to tell you that there is no short route to satisfaction. This is the reason I condemn short-term courses that claim they have the answers to all of life's problems and will equip you with the whole armor of God. Well, that's not the way God does it. There is no short route. Even God did not go the short route. He could have avoided the Cross and accepted the crown. That was Satan's suggestion. But suffering always comes before satisfaction. Phraseology bears various expressions: through trial to triumph; sunshine comes after the clouds; light follows darkness; and flowers come after the rain. That seems to be God's way of doing things. Since it is His method, then it is the very best way. Perhaps you are sitting in the shadows of life today. Trials confront you, and problems overwhelm you, and the fiery furnace is your present lot, and you have tasted the bitter without the sweet. If that is your case right now, then let me encourage your heart and fortify your faith by saying that you are on the same pathway that God followed, and that it leads at last to light if you walk with Him. ". . . weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" ([Ps. 30:5](#)).

Now with this in mind, let's look at the suffering Savior.

The Suffering Of The Savior (53:1-6)

This chapter opens with the enigmatic inquiry:

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? [[Isa. 53:1](#)].

The prophet seems to be registering a complaint because his message is not believed. That which was revealed to him is not received by men, and this is always the sad office of the prophet. When God called this man Isaiah, back in chapter 6, He told him, "You are going to get a message that the people won't hear. When you tell them My words, they won't believe you." That certainly was Isaiah's experience.

God's messengers have not been welcomed with open arms by the world. The prophets have been stoned and the message unheeded. That is still true today. After World War I, when everyone was talking about peace and safety, it was very, very unpopular even to suggest that there might be another war. Public opinion then demanded that we sink all the battleships and disarm ourselves, because our leaders told us that the world was safe for democracy. There were a few prophets of God in that period, standing in the pulpits of the land. They were not pacifists, but they did not care for war either. They declared in unmistakable terms that God's Word said there would be wars and rumors of war so long as there was sin, unrighteousness, and evil in the world. They stated that war was not a skin disease, but a heart disease, and they were proven correct when we entered World War II. When others declared that Christ was a pacifist, they called attention to the fact that He had said that a strong man armed keepeth his palace. I can recall that the church I attended as a boy had just such a minister. He was a faithful servant of Christ, and he sought to please God rather than men. But his message was largely rejected, and he was not popular with the crowd -- they preferred the liberal preacher in the town. But time has now proven that he was right, and current events demonstrate that he was a friend of this nation, not an enemy. He was a prophet of God and could say with Isaiah, "Who has believed our report?" There are a few prophetic voices lifted up right now in America. They are trying to call this nation back to God before it is too late, but the crowd is rushing headlong after another delusion.

Personally I am overwhelmed by the marvelous response to our Bible teaching program on radio. But every now and then we are reminded that we are in a Christ-rejecting world. Our program has been put off the air by several radio stations because they did not like our message. One radio manager called in to say that he did not like the kind of "religion" I was preaching. He wanted to know if it would be possible to give something a little bit more cheerful, because mankind was on the up-and-up and getting better and better. They weren't sinners, and things were not as bad as I seemed to think they were. This man's call, and others like it, simply serve to remind us that we are in a Christ-rejecting world, and we must accept it as such and keep on going. We rejoice today that we have as large an outlet as we do. I believe that there are many prophetic voices in our nation today trying to call us back to God before it is too late. In spite of that, the majority of the people are following any Pied Piper of liberalism who has a tune they can jig by and who makes them feel like everything is going to be all right.

Paul said the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness. From ideas publicly expressed we are given to know that there are many to whom the preaching of the Cross is foolishness. I admit there is a lot of foolish preaching and offer no apology for it. But God said they would identify the preaching of the Cross with foolishness. This message is a challenge to those folk, for there is a reason for them thinking as they do. God says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" ([1Cor. 2:14](#)). Would that they would give God a chance to talk with them!

It must be remembered that God does not use man's methods and ways to accomplish things. God chooses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty and the foolish things to confound the wise. If we were to call in a specialist in a time of illness, we certainly would not expect him to use the same home remedies normally used by us. His procedure might appear foolish to us, but we would follow it faithfully. Then should we not accord to God the same dealing of fairness as we do to the specialist?

But we still have to say with Isaiah, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?"

There is a very definite reason why men do not believe in God's gospel. Men like to think of God as sitting somewhere in heaven upon some lofty throne. The ancients spoke of the gods whose dwelling was not with mankind. The Greeks placed their deities upon Mount Olympus, and the Romans had Jupiter hurling thunderbolts from the battlements of the clouds. It is foreign to the field of religion that God has come down to this earth among men and that He suffered upon the shameful Cross. That is too much to comprehend. The modern mind calls that defeatism -- they do not care for it. A suffering deity is contrary to man's thinking.

However, there is a peculiar fascination about this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. There we see one suffering as no one else ever suffered. There we behold One in pain as a woman in travail. We are strangely drawn to Him and His cross. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" ([John 12:32](#)). Suffering has a singular attraction. Pain draws us all together. When you and I see some poor creature groaning in misery and covered with blood, our hearts instinctively go out in sympathy to the unfortunate victim. Somehow we want to help. That is the reason the Red Cross makes such an appeal to our hearts. Our sympathy is keen toward those who are war's victims, or the victims of twentieth century civilized barbarism. Pain places all of us on the same plane. It is a common bond uniting all the frail children of suffering humanity. Therefore look with me upon the strange sufferings of the Son of God. Let Him draw our cold hearts into the warmth of His sacrifice and the radiance of His love.

Isaiah enlarges upon his first question by asking further, "To whom is the [bared] arm of the LORD revealed?" "Bared arm" means that God has rolled up His sleeve, symbolic of a tremendous undertaking. When God created the heavens and the earth, it is suggested that it was merely His fingerwork. For instance, [Psalm 19:1](#) -- "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." That word handiwork is literally "fingerwork." Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage used to say that God created the physical universe without half trying. When God created the heavens and the earth, it was without

effort. He merely spoke them into existence. When He rested on the seventh day, He wasn't tired; he had just finished everything; it was completed. But when God redeemed man, it required His "bared arm," for salvation was His greatest undertaking. One of the objections offered to God's salvation is that it is free. If by that is meant that for man it is free, then this is correct. Man can pay nothing, nor does he have anything to offer for salvation. The reason that it is free for man is because it cost God everything. He had to bare His arm. He gave His Son to die upon the cross. Redemption is an infinite task that only God could perform. Salvation is free, but it certainly is not cheap.

Now we have brought before us the person of Christ. We are told something of His origin on the human side.

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him [[Isa. 53:2](#)].

Christ was a root out of a dry ground. This means that at the time of the birth of Christ the family of David had been cut off from the kingship. They were no longer princes; they were peasants. The nation Israel was under the iron heel of Rome. They were not free. The Roman Empire produced no great civilization. They merely were good imitators of great civilizations. There was mediocre achievement and pseudoculture. The moral foundation was gone. A virile manhood and a virtuous womanhood was supplanted by a debauched and pleasure-loving citizenry. The religion of Israel had gone to seed. They merely performed an empty ritual, and their hearts remained cold and indifferent. Into such a situation Christ came. He came from a noble family that was cut off, from a nation that had become a vassal to Rome, in a day and age that was decadent. The loveliest flower of humanity came from the driest spot and period of the world's history. It was humanly impossible for His day and generation to produce Him, but He came nevertheless, for He came forth from God.

Let me use a ridiculous illustration. Christ coming where He did and when He did would be like our walking out in the desert in Arizona, without a green sprig anywhere, and suddenly coming upon a great big head of iceberg lettuce growing right out of that dry, dusty soil. We would be amazed. We would say, "How in the world can this head of lettuce grow out here?" It would be a miracle. The coming of Christ was just like that. His day could never have produced Him. Evolution has always tried to get rid of the Lord Jesus, because it cannot produce a Jesus. If it can, why doesn't it? The interesting thing is that He is different. Therefore He is the root out of a dry ground.

Now the prophet focuses our attention immediately upon His suffering and death upon the cross.

"He hath no form nor comeliness [majesty]; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Some have drawn the inference from this statement that Christ was unattractive and misshapen in some way. Some even dare to suggest that He was repulsive in His personal appearance. That cannot be true because He was the perfect man. The Gospel records do not lend support to any such viewpoint. It was on the cross that this declaration of Him became true in a very real way. His suffering was so

intense that He became drawn and misshapen. The cross was not a pretty thing; it was absolutely repulsive to view. Men have fashioned crosses that look very attractive, but they do not represent His cross. His cross was not good to look upon; His suffering was unspeakable; His death was horrible. He endured what no other man endured. He did not even look human after the ordeal of the cross as we saw in the previous chapter. He was a mass of unsightly flesh.

Naturally, we are eager to learn why His death was different and horrible. What is the meaning of the depths of His suffering?

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted [[Isa. 53:4](#)].

He was "smitten of God, and afflicted." The prophet was so afraid that you and I would miss this that he mentioned it three times: "The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him." "He hath put him to grief." Consternation fills our souls when we recognize that it was God the Father who treated the perfect Man in such terrible fashion.

Candidly, we do not understand it, and we are led to inquire why God should treat Him in this manner. What had he done to merit such treatment? Look for a moment at that cross. Christ was on the cross six hours, hanging between heaven and earth from nine o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon. In the first three hours man did his worst. He heaped ridicule and insult upon Him, spit upon Him, nailed Him without mercy to the cruel cross, and then sat down to watch Him die. At twelve o'clock noon, after He had hung there for three hours in agony, God drew a veil over the sun, and darkness covered that scene, shutting out from human eye the transaction between the Father and the Son. Christ became the sacrifice for the sin of the world. God made His soul an offering for sin. Christ Jesus was treated as sin, for we are told that He was made sin for us who knew no sin. If you want to know if God hates sin, look at the Cross. If you want to know if God will punish sin, look at the Darling of His heart enduring the tortures of its penalty. By what vain conceit can you and I hope to escape if we neglect so great a salvation? That cross became an altar where we behold the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world. He was dying for somebody else -- He was dying for you and me.

Listen to the prophet:

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all [[Isa. 53:5-6](#)].

The phrase "with His stripes we are healed" may cause questions in your mind. Of what are we healed? Are we healed of physical diseases? Is that the primary meaning of it? I am going to let Simon Peter interpret this by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. [1Peter 2:24](#) says, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." Healed of

what? Peter makes it quite clear that we are healed of our trespasses and sins. Now notice that marvelous sixth verse. It begins with "all" and ends with "all." "All we like sheep have gone astray" -- not some of us, but all of us. What is really the problem with mankind? What is your basic and my basic problem? It is stated in this clause: "We have turned every one to his own way." That is our problem. Man has gone his way, neglecting God's way. And the Scripture further says: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" ([Prov. 14:12](#)). Another proverb admonishes: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" ([Prov. 3:6](#)). Although our Lord Jesus said, ". . . I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" ([John 14:6](#)), we have turned every one to his own way.

"And the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah is making it clear that when Christ died on the cross He was merely taking your place and mine. He had done nothing amiss. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. He was the Substitute whom the love of God provided for the salvation of you and me.

Surely our hearts go out in sympathy to Him as He expired there upon the tree. Certainly we are not unmoved at such pain and suffering. We would be cold-blooded, indeed, if our own hearts were not responsive. It is said that when Clovis, the leader of the Franks, was told about the crucifixion of Christ, he was so moved that he leaped to his feet, drew his sword, and exclaimed, "If I had only been there with my Franks!" Yet, my friend, Christ does not want your sympathy. He did not die to win that. He didn't die to enlist us in His defense. Remember that when He was on the way to the cross and the women of Jerusalem were weeping for Him, He said, ". . . weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. . . . For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" ([Luke 23:28, 31](#)). He did not want their sympathy, and He does not want ours.

Someone may be thinking that He died a martyr's death. He did not die a martyr's death, for He did not espouse a lost cause! He did not die as martyrs who in their death sang praises of joy and confessed that Christ was standing by them. Compare His death to that of Stephen's. Stephen in triumph said, ". . . Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" ([Acts 7:56](#)). Our Lord didn't die like that. He was forsaken of God. He said, ". . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" ([Matt. 26:46](#)). His death was different. He died alone -- alone with the sins of the world upon Him.

Someone else may feel like saying what a wonderful influence the death of Christ should exercise upon our lives. As we contemplate His life and death, most assuredly we ought to be persuaded to turn from sin. However, that has not been the experience of men. By the way, how did it work in your life? That view will not satisfy as an explanation of this verse: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." None of these will suffice to explain His death, for He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He took our place.

The Satisfaction Of The Savior (53:3-11)

At this point let me quote [verse 3](#), which speaks of Christ's grief.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not [[Isa. 53:3](#)].

Christ is identified as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," and the inference is that Christ was a very unhappy Man while He was here upon this earth. To fortify this position a few isolated incidents are quoted which speak of His weeping. Now I want to correct this impression if I can. In [verse 4](#) it says that "he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." Notice that it was our sorrows and our griefs that He bore. He had no grief or sorrow of His own. He was supremely happy in His mission here upon earth. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said of Him ". . . for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross" ([Heb. 12:2](#), italics mine). These pictures that show Him looking long-faced and very solemn misrepresent Him. Even on the cross He joyfully took our place. He made that cross an altar upon which He offered a satisfactory payment for the penalty of your sins and mine. Willingly He died there, for in [verse 7](#) we read, "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

Perhaps you are saying to yourself, "Preacher, that does not make sense to me. I do not believe that, nor do I care for that sort of religion. I do not want God to make a sacrifice for me. I did not ask Him to do it." Well, it is true that you did not ask Him to do it, but let me ask you a very plain and fair question. I am sure that you will agree that man has gotten this world into a very sad predicament today. The wisdom of man has failed to settle the issues of this life. Have you ever thought that man may be wrong about the next life when he dismisses God's remedy with a snap of the fingers? Vain philosophy and false science have not solved the problems of daily living. Since they are wrong in so many other areas, they may also be wrong about the Bible.

Suppose for a moment that God did give His Son to die for you and that He did make a tremendous sacrifice. Grant that the Cross is God's remedy for the sin of the world and that it is the very best that even God can do. Suppose also that you go on rejecting this gracious offer of salvation. Do you think that you can reasonably expect God to do anything for you in eternity? If God exhausted His love, His wisdom, and His power in giving Christ to die and patiently has waited for you to turn to Him, what else can He do to save you? What else do you suppose God can do for you, or for anyone, who rejects His Son? He would come again at this moment and die again if that would be the means to save you! It is no light thing to turn down God's love gift to you.

This does not end the gospel story. We do not worship a dead Christ; we worship a living One. He not only died, He rose again from the grave in victory. He ascended back into heaven. At this moment He is sitting at God's right hand, and the prophet says:

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities [[Isa. 53:11](#)].

We have a living and rejoicing Savior, for His suffering led to satisfaction. He took our hell that we might have His heaven. He is happy, for down through the ages multitudes, yes, millions, have come to Him and found sweet release from guilt, pardon for wrongdoing, and healing from the leprosy of sin. Christ said there is joy in heaven over

one sinner that repenteth, and that number can be multiplied by millions. Think of the joy and satisfaction of Christ today! We have a happy Christ, a joyful Christ, and it is going to be fun to be in His presence.

You can bring added joy to His heart by accepting the gift of eternal life that He longs to give to you. He is not asking anything of you -- He wants to give you something. It is for ". . . him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" ([Rom. 4:5](#)). All you have to do is accept Him right where you are. He invites you to the foot of the cross where you will find forgiveness for your sins. May this be your prayer and mine:

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand --
The shadow of a mighty Rock
Within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness,
A rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat,
And the burden of the day.
Upon the cross of Jesus
Mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One
Who suffered there for me:
And from my stricken heart with tears
Two wonders I confess --
The wonders of redeeming love
And my unworthiness.
"Beneath the Cross of Jesus"
-- Elizabeth C. Clephane,
"Beneath the Cross of Jesus"

What a marvelous prayer this is for a sinner to pray! It makes it very clear that all men will not be saved, that all men must accept the Substitute or they will be lost. It also makes clear that the total depravity of man is taught in the Bible, that we are in no condition to save ourselves. All without exception are involved in guilt, and all without exception are involved in sin, and all without exception are guilty of straying, and all without exception have turned away from God, and all without exception have chosen their own way.

Chapter 54

THEME: The regathered and restored wife of Jehovah; the rejoicing and righteous restored wife of Jehovah

This is the logical chapter to follow [Isaiah 53](#), because it is the song that accompanies salvation and the future glories of Israel. You see, the Redeemer is coming to Zion, and some day they will behold Him.

The Regathered And Restored Wife Of Jehovah (54:1-10)

He is speaking directly to Israel saying they should sing.

Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD [[Isa. 54:1](#)].

I can't sing. If you can, that's wonderful. But some day I am going to be able to sing. Redemption brings a song into the world. The world produces the blues; the redeemed sing of blessings. The world has its rock; the redeemed sing of redemption. The world plays jazz; the redeemed have the reality of joy. Only the redeemed have a song of joy. The redeemed will sing the song of redemption whether on earth or in heaven. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" ([Rev. 5:9-10](#)). What a picture we have here! You see, it is the church mentioned in Revelation, but in [Isaiah 54](#) it is the nation Israel. The church is called a chaste virgin while Israel is characterized as the restored wife.

"Sing, O barren." In the past Israel has been as a barren wife. Sarah's life was this in miniature. She was barren, childless, an old woman ninety years old with no children. God caused the barren to bring forth a son, and just think of the millions that have come from her!

So the first word after the crucifixion in chapter 53 is "Sing." It is a call to Israel to sing. But the Jews are not singing over in their land today. In the past Israel has been as a barren wife, but in the future her travailing will be over. Her travailing so far has produced only wind -- like the mountain that travailed and brought forth a mouse! But her future is glorious because she will have many children in the future.

Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes [[Isa. 54:2](#)].

The nation Israel has never occupied the entire land given to them by the Lord. The land God marked out for them in [Joshua 1:4](#) is about 300,000 square miles. Even in Israel's heyday, when they reached their zenith under David and Solomon, they only occupied 30,000 square miles -- that is quite a difference. Now God says they are going to lengthen their cords and strengthen their stakes. And they are going to be safe in the land. They won't need to be afraid of the Arab in that day. During the Millennium, Israel will occupy the total borders of the land. Also, the city of Jerusalem will push out into the suburban areas, and there will be no traffic jams.

For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited [[Isa. 54:3](#)].

The Gentiles have occupied most of the Land of Promise -- they have it today. But they will have to withdraw to their own borders. The problem in the world today is not only that individuals are trying to step over into somebody else's territory, but nations are trying to expand their borders. This causes problems. People just keep wanting more and more and more, which is what produces wars.

For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name;
and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole
earth shall he be called [[Isa. 54:5](#)].

God will own them then as His redeemed in that day.

For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in
spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God
[[Isa. 54:6](#)].

Israel is today like a wife that has been divorced for adultery. That is the figure of speech
that is used.

For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies
will I gather thee [[Isa. 54:7](#)].

In that day not only Israel, but all of us are going to look back at what we thought was
terrible down here in this life, and it will seem as Paul described it "a light affliction,
which is but for a moment." And it will work for us an "exceeding and eternal weight of
glory." We need to get our eyes focused on things which are not seen rather than things
that are seen (see [2Cor. 4:17-18](#)).

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my
kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of
my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee
[[Isa. 54:10](#)].

If you feel that God is going to break His covenant which He made with Abraham, Isaiah
would have you know that you are wrong. God will not break His covenant; He will
never break it.

The Rejoicing And Righteous Restored Wife Of Jehovah (54:11-17)

O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I
will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with
sapphires [[Isa. 54:11](#)].

Now God begins to comfort Israel that she might rejoice.

And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be
the peace of thy children [[Isa. 54:13](#)].

This is the day when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth. This brings peace.

In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from
oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not
come near thee [[Isa. 54:14](#)].

Following righteousness is freedom from fear.

Now notice this marvelous verse of Scripture.

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every
tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt

condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD [[Isa. 54:17](#)].

Even in the past and in the present, God has been opposed to anti-Semitism. No enemy of God's chosen nation has ever prospered. The witnesses to this truth are Pharaoh, Haman, Herod, and Hitler. There are a lot of anti-Semites in this country who ought to read this verse. This verse is a promise of God.

Chapter 55

THEME: Invitation to the world; the ways of God; institution of the Word of God

The work of the suffering Servant in chapter 53 makes possible the offer of salvation in this chapter. In chapter 54 the invitation was confined to Israel. In this chapter the invitation is extended to the entire world. The gospel went first to Israel and then to the Gentiles. I think this is what Paul meant when he said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" ([Rom. 1:16](#)). This does not mean that the Jew has top priority today, but he shouldn't have bottom priority either; he is on the same par as everyone else. The Jew did receive the gospel first. Peter on the day of Pentecost preached to an all-Jewish congregation -- there wasn't a Gentile in the lot. Now this invitation goes out to the world. This is remarkable because there have been very few religious leaders who have had a global view. The work of the suffering Servant in chapter 53 makes possible now the offer of salvation to a lost world.

God's invitation has yet to find its complete fulfillment in Israel. Today it is worldwide, with only one condition, as we shall see. This is not a mechanical offer locked in the airtight compartment of God's election, but it rests upon the free-flowing will of each hearer. He is urged -- in fact, he is commanded -- to seek the Lord.

Invitation To The World (55:1-5)

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price [[Isa. 55:1](#)].

The chapter opens with the heart cry of God to every one to pause and consider His salvation.

"Ho" is like a startled cry for help in the night. He wants every weak soul to behold His mighty bared arm of salvation.

The invitation is ecumenical. I don't believe in the ecumenical movement that men talk about today, but I do believe in God's ecumenical movement, which is that the invitation of the gospel is to go out to the world. However, it is limited to one class: "Ho, every one that thirsteth." This invitation is to every man, woman, and child on the topside of the earth. It means every man of every station in life, in all strata of society, from every race, tribe, tongue, condition, and color. All are included. The invitation is "Ho, every one."

But notice that it is limited to only certain ones -- "every one that thirsteth." It is for those whose thirst has not been slaked by the man-made cisterns and bars of this earth. The

invitation is to drink deep and long of the eternal springs. Dr. F. C. Jennings has written: "Let us listen then, as if we had never heard the melody of this tender and gracious invitation before. Who are the guests here invited? All who thirst! All that is needed to be welcome then, is -- not to need (for that is true of all) -- but to want what is offered. Am I utterly dissatisfied with myself? I thirst! Am I dissatisfied with all the world can offer me, and of which I have tasted? I thirst! Is my spirit altogether dissatisfied with all the formalism of religion? Then do I thirst! Blessed thirst! It is the only prerequisite to enjoyment!" (Studies in Isaiah, p. 645).

This is the invitation: "Ho, everyone that thirsteth." If you say, "I am not interested. I am not thirsty. I am satisfied with the things of this life," then it is not for you, my friend. It is not for you until you are thirsty. Here in California you will be riding along in the desert and all of a sudden you will see on a billboard a picture of a bottle pushed down into some cracked ice. My, it looks good! There is only one word printed on the sign -- "THIRSTY?" The company that put up the sign hopes you are thirsty. They want you to stop at the next service station and buy a coke or whatever they are selling. If you have your thermos bottles filled with iced tea, or orange juice, you say, "I am not thirsty," and drive on. But if you are thirsty, you will pull off at the next service station and get your drink.

At the crossroads of life God has put up a sign: "THIRSTY?" Ho, every one that is thirsty. Are you tired of this world? Have you found that it does not satisfy? Do you long for something better? God says, "I have something for you." Then He mentions a variety of things and says that you can buy these things without money. A bottled drink used to cost a nickel, now you are to pay forty cents and by the time you read this, the price may have gone even higher. But God's offer is without money. Why? Because back in [Isaiah 53](#) the Lord Jesus paid the price for it on the Cross. This is God's invitation to you, "Come ye, buy, and eat." Not only drink, but He offers the bread of life, too.

Notice that there are three types of drink offered:

1. "Waters" -- the plural form is used. In the Hebrew the plural expresses a superlative degree. This water is too wonderful to be expressed by the singular form. "Waters" also speaks of abundance, of quantity as well as quality. This is water for the soul. This is the kind of water that the Lord Jesus offered -- and He used the same symbolism -- when he stood in the temple area that day and cried, ". . . If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" ([John 7:37](#)). Now we know where the fountain is -- that fountain is Christ, who is the Water of Life and our Savior.
2. "Wine" is the second type of drink offered, which symbolizes joy. In [Proverbs 31:6](#) we read, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts." And [1Thessalonians 1:6](#) says, "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" (italics mine). Joy is what you have when Christ is not only your Savior but when He becomes the Master of your life. When you come to know Him, you have joy. In [1John 1:4](#) John says, "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (italics mine). I saw this motto in a preacher's study in Salem, Oregon: "Joy is the flag that is flown in the

heart when the Master is in residence." That is a marvelous drink that will put genuine joy in your heart!

3. "Milk" is the third type of drink offered. Milk is essential for growth and development, especially for babies. The dairy industry has been trying to tell people: "Every body needs milk." Well, the milk of the Word of God is essential for spiritual growth. Now, since I am a teacher of the Word of God, that makes me a milkman. I give out the milk of the Word. Peter said it like this, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" ([1Pet. 2:2](#)). Have you ever seen a little baby while his mama gets his bottle ready? That hungry little fellow, lying in his crib, is wiggling his feet, his hands; in fact, he is wiggling all over. With his mouth he is making all kinds of commotion and a great deal of noise! Why? Because he desires milk. And a child of God ought to want the milk of the Word of God with equal longing! My friend, if you are a believer, there is something wrong with you if you don't like to study the Word of God. The greatest problem in our churches today is that we are entertaining, we are giving nice little courses in this and that and the other thing, we are giving banquets and dinners, and we are putting folk on committees. We are doing everything but giving them the Word of God. Many church members are stillborn -- they have no spiritual life. My friend, if you are a believer, you ought to want the sincere milk of the Word of God.

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness [[Isa. 55:2](#)].

Many folk, even Christians today, are spending money for so-called Christian enterprises that don't feed anybody. I hear some people today calling money bread -- I rather like that expression. The Word of God is "bread" also. A lot of Christians put their money into that which is not bread, although they think it is. It would be well to investigate where you give your money. It may be that you are buying a load of sawdust, which won't satisfy your heart and life.

The question is asked, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?" The pleasures of this world are expensive. You have to pay for them. Not only are they expensive, but they never satisfy. They are counterfeit. They are sawdust and cannot satisfy the soul. Then where is happiness? You won't find it in money. Jay Gould, an American millionaire, had plenty of that. When he was dying, he said: "I suppose that I am the most miserable devil on earth." You won't find happiness in pleasure either. Lord Byron had fame, genius, money, and lived a life of pleasure, yet he wrote in his poem "On My Thirty-sixth Year": "The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone."

Why don't you come to the table where you can get some water, wine, milk, and bread that satisfies? That's where we all need to be today.

Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David [[Isa. 55:3](#)].

God was merciful to David, and He will be merciful to you and me today. I heard a man speaking in Pershing Square in Los Angeles one day, deriding and ridiculing the Bible.

One Sunday evening I saw him in church when I was a pastor in downtown Los Angeles. After the service he came to talk to me, feigning a humble approach, and said, "Pastor, I have a question to ask you. Why did God choose a man like David?" Then he leered at me, and I knew exactly what the old rascal was thinking. I said, "I'll tell you why God chose a man like David. It was so that you and I would have the courage to come to Him. If God would take David, He might take you, and he might take me!" The sure mercies of David -- how wonderful they are!

Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people [[Isa. 55:4](#)].

Jesus is called the true witness for us in our day.

Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee [[Isa. 55:5](#)].

"Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not" -- at that time Isaiah didn't know about the United States of America, but we are included in his prophecy.

The Ways Of God (55:6-9)

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near [[Isa. 55:6](#)].

The way of God and the way of man are put in contrast and conflict. The objection is often made that this is not a legitimate gospel call for today since man is not asked to seek God, but rather God is seeking man. This certainly is accurate, but nonetheless this call is for today, as the human aspect is in view here. Human responsibility is not defeated by the sovereign purposes and election of God. Therefore the Lord Jesus could say, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" ([John 6:37](#)). You can sit on the sidelines and argue that you are not one of the elect; but the minute you come, you are a member of the elect. And the coming is up to you.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon [[Isa. 55:7](#)].

The problem people have today is not mental. You may say, "I have great intellectual hurdles to surmount before I can come to Christ." No, you don't. You have only one -- that is sin in your life that you don't want to give up. That is the one thing that keeps men from God. "Let the wicked forsake his way," and when you do, then you will be ready to turn to Him. That is when you really get thirsty.

Now God says --

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD [[Isa. 55:8](#)].

God's way is different from man's way. The gospel is God's way. It is not man-made. No man could ever have devised it. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" ([Gal. 1:11-12](#)). The gospel came down from heaven. It is God's gospel.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts [[Isa. 55:9](#)].

The gospel could come only by revelation, since man's reason never follows the redemption route.

Institution Of The Word Of God (55:10-13)

When the gospel is given out, the emphasis is placed on the accuracy and the reliability and the importance of the Word of God.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater.

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it [[Isa. 55:10-11](#)].

In this closing section there is a prominence given to the Word of God. The only place where the gospel is found is in the Word of God. Salvation is a revelation of God, and the Word of God is likened to the rain that comes down from heaven. You see, the gospel is not asking you to do something. Neither is the gospel something that man has thought up. Man does not work his way up to God by some Tower of Babel effort, but he receives God's revelation which comes down from heaven like rain. The rain causes the earth to become fruitful. The seeds germinate and fructify and bring forth abundantly. The Word of God is also the seed; and, when the rain and seed get together in the human heart, there will be fruit.

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands [[Isa. 55:12](#)].

The rain causes the earth to respond with a green blanket of praise to God. During the Millennium the earth will respond with a note of praise to the Creator and Redeemer. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" ([Rom. 8:22](#)).

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off [[Isa. 55:13](#)].

This verse looks forward to the Millennium when the earth will be redeemed from the curse of sin. The curse of sin is expressed by the thorn and brier. When Christ died, He not only redeemed sinners, He also redeemed a sin-cursed earth.

Chapter 56

THEME: Grand particulars of the future Kingdom; predicament of the present kingdom

The chapter before us follows a pattern that goes back to that marvelous fifty-third chapter, which tells of the salvation of the Lord provided for lost mankind by the sacrifice of His Son upon the Cross.

Now Isaiah the prophet returns to the nation of Israel and is speaking to his own people. What we have in this chapter is not a retreat to Mount Sinai (as some seem to think) but rather a victory march through the arch of triumph into the Millennium. It is a forward movement which is the logical outworking of what has preceded. It pertains particularly to Israel and radiates out into a widening circle of global benefits. This all rests on the new covenant which God has made with Israel. It will be the blessing for the earth in the future. At that time the Mosaic Law, which the Lord Jesus lifted to the nth degree in His Sermon on the Mount, will be enforced on the earth because Christ will be reigning. It will be His will and it will be His law.

The emphasis in this chapter is on ethics, not on events. The emphasis is on practice, not prophecy. All of this should influence our living today. The study of prophecy is not to entertain the curious or to intrigue the intellect but to encourage holy living. Remember that the apostle John wrote: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" ([1John 3:3](#)). The study of prophecy gives us a purifying hope.

Isaiah now is looking forward into the Kingdom Age, the Millennium. The Lord Jesus is reigning. As we said, our Lord lifted the Mosaic Law to the nth degree in His Sermon on the Mount, which makes it absolutely impossible for anybody to be saved by keeping the Law. For instance, He said, ". . . Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [a word of contempt], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" ([Matt. 5:22](#)). On that kind of basis, very few of us would escape. How, then, are we going to be saved? Well, we have a Savior who saves us. But when He is reigning on earth, there will be no hijacking of planes, no kidnapping, no murdering, no mugging. We will be able to walk in safety down Glory Boulevard and Hallelujah Avenue in Jerusalem; the earth will be a safe place in that day. Every man will dwell in peace under his own vine and fig tree, which means he is going to be a capitalist. Everyone will own property and will not be taxed for it. That's going to be great, isn't it!

Grand Particulars Of The Future Kingdom (56:1-8)

Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed [[Isa. 56:1](#)].

"My salvation is near to come" -- apparently the prophets expected the establishment of the Kingdom immediately. Although they made allowance for the possibility of an

interval, they speak of it in the immediate future. "Salvation" is the national salvation of Israel. This is what was in the mind of the apostle Paul in [Romans 11:26](#) when he said, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Anticipation of the coming salvation was to be an incentive to do justice -- just as our hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is an incentive today to lead a holy life.

Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil [[Isa. 56:2](#)].

This, you see, is for a people who are back under the Sabbath. The Sabbath will be restored to this earth during the Millennium. During this present day of grace we are definitely told: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" ([Col. 2:16](#)). Therefore, you and I are not under the Sabbath -- which ought to be evident to everyone. But God intends to restore it to the earth when Christ reigns, for the law will go forth from Jerusalem.

Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree [[Isa. 56:3](#)].

The Gentile in that day is not to feel that he is an outsider because of God's peculiar arrangement with Israel. On the contrary, he is invited to step up and share the blessings. A eunuch could not serve as a priest under the Mosaic economy. In other words, a physical handicap will shut no one out in that future day.

For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;

Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off [[Isa. 56:4-5](#)].

The handicapped, the strangers, and all outcasts are invited to accept God's gracious overture of a position that is better than a son or daughter and a security that is everlasting. This the Law did not give. He is talking about the Millennium, of course.

Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant [[Isa. 56:6](#)].

The stranger will be given a new heart that he might love the Lord in that day.

Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people [[Isa. 56:7](#)].

This is the verse from which the Lord quoted when He cleansed the temple the second time. It was God's original intention that the temple was to be for all people irrespective of their race, tongue, class, or condition. It had long ceased to function as such in Christ's day.

Also the present-day church is as far removed from its primary objective as the temple. The church has become like a suburban country club. It has moved from the downtown area and into the suburban area where it is serving good meals and has good volleyball and basketball teams. But there are few personal workers bringing the lost to the Lord.

The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him
[\[Isa. 56:8\]](#).

The Kingdom is to be worldwide in its extent and will include members of every family of the human race. God says in that day they are going to go out after folk. I believe that the greatest time of turning to Christ will take place during the Millennium.

Predicament Of The Present Kingdom (56:9-12)

Now that we have seen the marvelous view of the future Kingdom, Isaiah returns to the predicament of the kingdom of his day. And we see the same problems as we look around us today.

All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest [\[Isa. 56:9\]](#).

Our vision is now shifted from the lofty contemplation of the glorious future Kingdom to the sorry condition of the then existing kingdom. God was permitting the nations of the world to come in like wild and ferocious beasts, and they were robbing and pillaging His people. Assyria had already broken in, and Babylon was soon to break in; later others would come to plunder and destroy. If you have ever seen pictures of the walls of Jerusalem and the wailing wall, you can see that they are built of stones from different periods of civilizations. It is quite evident that the city has been destroyed repeatedly. History tells us that Jerusalem has been destroyed at least twenty-seven times, and today it is built upon debris. To go down to the place where Christ walked this earth you would have to dig thirty to fifty feet below the present surface. God permitted nations to come against Israel. Why? Because Israel failed Him so.

Note this remarkable verse --

His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber
[\[Isa. 56:10\]](#).

This is a picture of the prophets and priests who spoke for God in that day. God permitted the enemy to take Jerusalem because of the weak and inadequate leaders of the people. They were blind. They were ignorant. They were dumb dogs. In the New Testament Paul warned the people to beware of dogs (see [Phil. 3:2](#)). What did he mean? Well, he's not talking about being wary of a stranger's dog that barks at you. He is referring to false teachers and preachers who are not declaring the full counsel of God. In Isaiah's day

every shepherd had a dog to help him watch the sheep. The dog would lie down at night and keep one eye open. The minute a dangerous animal or a human being came to harm or to steal a sheep, the dog would bark. Watchmen -- the prophets and the priests who should have been warning God's people and giving out the Word of God -- were ignorant of it. They were like dumb dogs who did not bark when there was danger. It was easier for them to keep quiet.

Liberalism, in my judgment, came into being because of the cowardly position that many ministers took. When you preach the Word of God, you step on toes. I know this -- I have been doing it for years. I try to be as nice as I can about preaching the Word, but it is strong and this verse is very strong. The man who stands in the pulpit and won't give out God's Word is a dumb dog! I didn't say that, but Isaiah did say it, and Isaiah wrote at the direction of the Holy Spirit of God. A dumb dog is a man who won't give out the Word of God. He lies down and sleeps. He cannot bark. He loves to slumber. It is much more comfortable for the pastor to try to please his people.

Over the years I have received many letters from pulpit committees asking me to recommend a pastor. Then they list the qualifications they want him to have. The top priority qualification is personality. They want a friendly pastor who knows how to communicate to all groups -- a man that the senior citizens will love and the young people will love. Some of the letters don't even ask for a man with the ability to teach the Word of God! As a result, there are a lot of dumb dogs in pulpits. I am sorry to say this, but it is true, and Isaiah said it before I did.

Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter [[Isa. 56:11](#)].

"They are greedy dogs." They are concerned with their own personal interests rather than the welfare of their people.

One day I had lunch with a preacher friend of mine who is retired. He said to me, "McGee, you are making your message on the radio a little strong, aren't you? Suppose people turn against you and won't support your program?" I replied, "Then I'll go off the air and just tell the Lord about it. If He intends for me to stay on the air, He intends for me to give out His Word. Very frankly, I think that this is His problem, not mine. I'll just give out His word."

Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with a strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant [[Isa. 56:12](#)].

These people drowned their sad plight and condition in drink, and they faced the future as drunkards and blind optimists. There are many people today who are facing life like that. They drown their troubles in drink. In our nation today, my friend, we have an alcohol problem among adults and young people -- and even children! I am seeing more drunkards today than I have ever seen before in my long life. When I was on a plane the other day, I was seated near a dear old grandmother. She was the sweetest looking little thing, and I just wished she were my grandmother. I was thinking, Well, she is one person on this plane who won't be ordering a cocktail. And, do you know, she ordered a

Bloody Mary! Oh, boy, she tossed them down! Obviously she was accustomed to that sort of thing. The morality of our nation is gone, my friend. And a great many Christians don't want to hear about it; they would rather listen to soft, sweet music.

Well, you don't get into trouble when you play soft music, but you do when you give out the Word of God. But Isaiah told it like it was, and that's what I intend to do also.

Chapter 57

THEME: Contrast between the righteous and wicked; comfort for the righteous; condemnation of the wicked

Now I grant you that today the wicked have it easy -- they are the ones in comfort. They are the ones with the money, and they seem to be on top. But when we get to the end of the age, it will be comfort for the righteous and condemnation for the wicked.

This chapter marks the end of the second section of the final division of Isaiah, which I have labeled, "The salvation of Jehovah which comes through the suffering Servant." Those who come in humility and accept it are made righteous. Those who reject it proceed on their wicked way to judgment. This chapter brings us to the crossroads where the way that leads to life goes one way and the broad way to destruction goes another way. The destination and division are right here.

Contrast Between The Righteous And Wicked (57:1-8)

The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from evil to come [[Isa. 57:1](#)].

"The righteous perisheth." Many of God's wonderful saints are being taken away today through the doorway of death. God is removing them from a lot of trouble that is going to come in the future. When I started my ministry, I worried about myself. Then I had a child and I worried about her. Now I have two grandsons, and I worry about them. I no longer worry about myself or my daughter, but I do worry about those two little fellows because their lot in the future is going to be rough.

He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness [[Isa. 57:2](#)].

"He shall enter into peace" -- he shall have peace in his heart. "They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." If death comes to him while he is in bed, he will be removed from the Great Tribulation and will be taken into the presence of Christ. They will have peace regardless of what may come to them.

But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore [[Isa. 57:3](#)].

Now God addresses the wicked. Even their ancestry is bad -- note the label given their mothers!

Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood [[Isa. 57:4](#)].

They have been the persecutors of the righteous. Up to this point God has not intervened. Look around you today. Attacks are being made upon the righteous. They are not having an easy time. The attacks are coming hard and fierce, and the wicked seem to get by with it.

Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks? [[Isa. 57:5](#)].

The wicked in the last days are the idolaters who have turned their backs on God. They are guilty of gross immorality and murder. Adultery and murder are two of the terrible sins of our day also -- coupled with covetousness, which is idolatry. This is the condition of the wicked at the present time.

Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these? [[Isa. 57:6](#)].

They will even worship the smooth stones in the brook that once slew a giant. They worship everything except the living and true God.

Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice [[Isa. 57:7](#)].

Now idolatry, associated with the groves on the mountaintops, gives place to scenes of the vilest immorality. It is a picture of the last days.

Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it [[Isa. 57:8](#)].

In the past, sin was committed in secret, but at the present time sin has become brazen and flaunts itself. Somebody asked me, "Don't you think there was as much immorality in the past as there is now?" I agreed that there may have been as much, but it was kept secret. Men were ashamed of their sin, but today they are not. The other day I listened to a pretty little girl on television talk about the man she lives with who is not her husband. She was commended by others on the program for not being a hypocrite. She may not be a hypocrite, but she is a sinner in God's sight. What would not even have been whispered about a few years ago is done in the open today. Sin has become a way of life. There are no longer high standards. The wheat and the tares are growing together exactly as the Lord said they would.

We see the contrast between the righteous and the wicked all through this section.

Comfort For The Righteous (57:15-19)

In the second division Isaiah speaks of comfort for the righteous.

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,
whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him
also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of
the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones [[Isa.
57:15](#)].

God in the last days comforts His own because of who He is -- "the high and lofty One." He is the God of eternity. How feeble man is with his threescore years and ten down here. Man doesn't last very long on earth. The eternal God promises to take those who do not trust in themselves, but trust in Him, and He covers them as a mother hen covers her brood. What peace and security there is for those who belong to God! This verse looks beyond our day to the time of the Great Tribulation; we are coming here to the end of the age.

For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for
the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made
[[Isa. 57:16](#)].

He is the eternal God, but He will not always be angry with sin, because sin is to be removed.

For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I
hid me, and was wroth, and he went on forwardly in the way of his
heart [[Isa. 57:17](#)].

God explains why He punishes the wicked. The wicked are covetous, and they go on in rebellion against God. I am sure that any intelligent person knows that a holy God will one day stop rebellion. God will have to punish those with rebellious and proud hearts.

I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and
restore comforts unto him and to his mourners [[Isa. 57:18](#)].

For those who will forsake the wickedness of their ways, He will heal and save them. He is a gracious God toward the righteous.

I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and
to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him [[Isa.
57:19](#)].

God alone can speak peace to the heart of the sinner.

Condemnation Of The Wicked (57:20-21)

Each one of these last three divisions can be marked off at the place where God says, as He did in [Isaiah 48:22](#), "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked." I think this is something that is quite evident. Man's history is one of warfare and constant conflict. It is not only true among nations, but also between individuals -- although they call it competition. You will find it in the business world, the social world, and in the religious world. You will find conflict in practically every town, every hamlet, and in many homes in our country. God says that there is no peace for the wicked. You cannot make peace in the human heart apart from God. So far no one has been able to do it.

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest,
whose waters cast up mire and dirt [[Isa. 57:20](#)].

This is probably one of the most picturesque descriptions of the wicked in Scripture. Like the troubled and restless sea, the wicked person can find no rest or peace in his wicked ways. He continues on like a hunted criminal looking for deliverance and safety.

Several years ago an eighty-year-old man walked into the police station in Jackson, Mississippi, and said, "For fifty years I have been carrying a murder on my conscience. Another man has already paid the penalty for it, but I'm the one who is guilty. I have to make the confession of it." They found that, according to law, when another man had already paid the penalty, they couldn't execute the actual criminal or even hold him because another man had served the sentence. Probably the worst punishment this man had was fifty years of misery with a guilty conscience. He had had no peace of heart and mind at all.

There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked [[Isa. 57:21](#)].

If the world can have peace today without God, then it is a contradiction of the Word of God. You cannot contradict God's Word. The wicked cannot have peace in the world, and they don't have it today. God says that the wicked will have no peace. That is an axiom of God, and it is like the law of gravity -- it works.

Chapter 58

THEME: Exposure of Israel's wicked ways; explanation from God for rejecting religious acts; God's concern for their welfare

This chapter brings us to the final division of the prophecy of Isaiah -- "The glory of Jehovah which comes through the suffering Servant." We move on in this section to the glory of the Kingdom. Inward wicked ways and outward religious forms delay the grace and glory of God and hurt the cause of Christ as much as anything. Men who are religious and are church members and yet curse like pagans, men who are dishonest in business, immoral in their social lives, yet talk about being good enough to meet God's standards, actually block the grace and glory of God.

The explanation is given here as to why the glory was withheld. The people were supercilious and cynical about their relationship to God. They were observing forms and dared to question the actions of God toward them. They sat in judgment upon God and His methods. A lot of people still do this today. In spite of their outward observance of religion they indulge in their own wicked ways.

This same spirit was manifested after the Babylonian captivity, which reveals that the captivity did not cure them. In [Malachi 3:13-14](#) we read, "Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?" They were criticizing God for not blessing them -- yet look how religious they were! They went to the temple and they made sacrifices. It was brazen effrontery and audacity to question God! This is

the spirit of the natural man with his outward show of religion. His heart is far from God, and his way is wicked. The veneer of godliness is nauseating to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord said to the Laodicean church, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" ([Rev. 3:16](#)). This is the attitude of the Lord Jesus to a lot of churchianity in our day.

Exposure Of Israel's Wicked Ways (58:1-3)

Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins [[Isa. 58:1](#)].

The prophet is commanded to cry aloud a message that is always unpopular, which is to point out the transgressions and sins of a people who think they are very religious. This will bring down the bitter displeasure and caustic invective upon one's head. Only a very brave man will do it. I would say that the basic weakness of liberalism in the pulpit is its aim to please the natural man without telling him the real truth about his fatal disease. The medical profession today would be guilty of gross negligence if they followed the same procedure with the physical part of man that religion plays with the spiritual part of man. When the doctor told me I had cancer, I tried my best to get him to say that it was something else. He said, "I am going to tell you exactly what is wrong with you. I will tell it exactly like it is. If I don't, you won't have any confidence in me." God is telling it exactly like it is. And He wants His servants to tell mankind that they are suffering from the fatal disease of sin, which is going to eventuate in eternal death, eternal separation from almighty God.

Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God [[Isa. 58:2](#)].

I think there is an element of God's biting satire in this statement. These people were attending the temple worship regularly. They were going through the ordinances punctiliously. They were meticulous in following the forms of worship. They actually enjoyed going to the temple; yet their lives bore no resemblance to those of believers. What was true in that day is also true today.

Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours [[Isa. 58:3](#)].

These people are petulantly complaining. They ask the reason for fasting and self-infliction if God doesn't take note of it and pat them on the back for the ritual. Yet their hearts are far from God. They evidently had made fasting an important part of their religion. God never gave them fast days; He gave them feast days. It is true that they were to afflict their souls in connection with the great Day of Atonement, and in times of sin they were to fast. Fasting was the outward expression of the soul, but they had made it a form which ministered to their ego and pride. They boasted of the fact that they fasted. Fasting was to be a private matter between the soul and God -- not a public show. Our Lord condemned them for abusing the fast. When He was here He said, "Moreover when

ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward [which was to be seen of men]" ([Matt. 6:16](#)). They needn't expect anything from God, for they didn't do it because of their relationship with Him. The Lord Jesus said to those who are His own: "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" ([Matt. 6:17-18](#)). Real religion is a personal relationship with Christ, and it is as secret and private as anything can possibly be. Do you go around and tell others about your intimate relationship with your wife or your husband? Of course you don't. My friend, if you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, it is a precious secret between the two of you. You witness for Him, but you don't reveal your intimate moments with Him. My friend, are you boasting about your religion, or about going through a certain ceremony or ritual? Shame on you! They are nothing in the sight of God -- unless they reveal what is within your heart. Oh, how we need reality rather than ritual!

I am of the opinion that many folk in that day questioned Isaiah's message. They probably said, "Isaiah, what in the world are you talking about? You criticize these people who are very religious, who go regularly to the temple and make their sacrifices!" But, you see, God knows the heart. Their religion was only superficial. They had no real relationship with God.

Explanation From God For Rejecting Religious Acts (58:4-7)

In this next section God explains His reason for rejecting their show of religion.

Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high [[Isa. 58:4](#)].

God explains why He cannot accept their fasting. They thought it gave them special acceptance with Him.

Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? [[Isa. 58:5](#)].

God had not commanded their fasting, and their acts of worship were entirely outward and did not reveal the condition of the heart.

This is largely the condition of the contemporary church. I don't say it is the condition of your church -- there are many wonderful churches. But, by and large, the organized church has only a form of godliness.

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? [[Isa. 58:6](#)].

This is tremendous -- it gets right down to the nitty-gritty, right down where the rubber meets the road. God says in effect, "If you really want to fast, let Me tell you what to do: Instead of fasting and going around with a pious look, stop your sinning. Stop your

gossiping. Stop the things that reveal the wickedness and the evil in your hearts. Demonstrate your faith in Me by your conduct. Start being honest in your dealings. Be truthful in what you say. Instead of seeing you in sackcloth and covered with ashes, I'd like to see you clean on the inside."

My friend, I am of the opinion that the Lord could stop many church services today and say, "Listen, let's cut this out. Why are you going through this form? You are not getting close to me. You are not pleasing Me. When you leave this service, you gossip, you have bitterness in your heart, you are not moral in your conduct, and you are living loose lives. You think you are pleasing Me by your religious form. I want you to know that you are not pleasing Me. That is the reason I am rejecting you."

Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? [[Isa. 58:7](#)].

They were turning their backs on the poor and needy. They even refused to show kindness and love to their own flesh and blood. Their religion was as cold as the north side of a tombstone in January! They didn't have a heart for God. When you have a heart for God, my friend, you will also have a heart for other folk. You will want to be helpful to them and be a blessing to them. You cannot be hateful and fundamental in your theology at the same time. All of the criticism and unloveliness today is harmful to the cause of Christ. Isaiah has a tremendous message for us!

God told His people that He didn't want their so-called worship -- they were just going through a form. They were just "playing church." He told them that they might think they were having fun, but it was going to become a burden to them because they would become weary trying to keep up a front before the world. God said to them, "Come clean. Demonstrate in your lives that you have reality."

Do you see why Isaiah is not popular? You will never find liberalism dealing with this part of the Bible. They like to turn to the Sermon on the Mount and pick out a few verses, such as: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" ([Matt. 5:7](#)). That is great, but the important thing is to confess your sin to God and allow Christ to live His life through you. Religion is a great cover-up today. Oh, how we need a personal relationship with Christ!

God's Concern For Their Welfare (58:8-14)

God wants His people to turn to Him in a real way.

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward [[Isa. 58:8](#)].

God could not manifest His blessing and glory to a people who practiced their religion so badly. This is one of the reasons the world today is not convinced that God is in His holy temple. The world is passing by the church. Why? They don't believe God is there. And I suspect they might be right. God says here, "I can't manifest myself because of your lives." How many of us are blocking the way! The story is told that when Alexander the

Great returned from one of his campaigns, he rushed to find his old teacher, Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher. It so happened that Aristotle was taking a bath when his visitor arrived. Alexander told him about his campaign and then said, "Now what can I do for you?" The old philosopher was not at all impressed with this young upstart and continued his bathing. Alexander repeated the question, "Now what can I do for you?" Finally old Aristotle replied, "Well, you can get out of my light!" Perhaps we are saying to God, "What can I do for You?" I think God would answer, "You can get out of my light!" Let's allow His light to shine through us. That's the important thing.

Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry,
and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of
thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity
[\[Isa. 58:9\]](#).

God wanted to hear their prayers and He wanted to bless. He wanted to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing upon them, but their hearts weren't open to receive it. We say, "Our prayers are not answered." Why? Is it because God does not want to answer them? No! The problem is that our hearts are not open to receive the blessing God really wants to give us. God says, "The minute you cry to Me, here I am."

When I was a boy, I had typhoid fever and double pneumonia at the same time. I lived in a little country town, and one night the country doctor thought I was going to die. My mother sat by my bed all night. I was delirious most of the time, but I can still remember coming out of it and calling her name, "Mama?" She would say, "Here I am." What a comfort that was for a little boy. And today what a comfort to know that when we go to God in prayer, He is there. He says, "Here I am." In effect, God says, "It's up to you from now on. If you come in the name of My Son, make a request that is in My will, and your heart is right, I'm going to move right along with you." When we have prayers which are not being answered, the problem is with us.

And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the
afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy
darkness be as the noon day [\[Isa. 58:10\]](#).

God asked them to practice one specific thing that He might bless them. He only picked out one thing. He could have picked out a dozen things, but He chose only one. God promised to bless them if they would show reality in their religion.

And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in
drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered
garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not [\[Isa. 58:11\]](#).

God wanted to bless them, you see.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy
pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy
of the LORD, honourable; and shall honor him, not doing thine own
ways, or finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words
[\[Isa. 58:13\]](#).

God gave the Sabbath to the nation Israel. God said, "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever . . ." ([Exod. 31:17](#)). For something interesting, read the entire passage of [Exodus 31:12-18](#). Now God turns to this specific thing that He commanded them as a people.

For us today it is a little different. We are told: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" ([Heb. 4:1](#)). The word for "rest" is sabbath -- we should not come short of entering into His rest. "For he that is entered into his rest [that is, the sabbath], he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" ([Heb. 4:10](#)). Now have you entered into His sabbath, which is the rest of redemption? Have you come to the place where you completely, fully trust Christ -- that He has done everything necessary for your salvation and you are resting in His finished work? Or do you feel compelled to do something in order to earn or not lose your salvation? My friend, He wants us to fully trust Christ. To enter into His rest will mean not only great blessing for us, but it will open up an avenue of service for us. The thing that brought the apostle Paul to a life of missionary activity was to enter into the rest of redemption.

Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it [[Isa. 58:14](#)].

The horizon here is extended, and the vista of the future opens before us. They may delay the approaching glory, but they cannot destroy God's plan for the coming manifestation of His glory.

Chapter 59

THEME: Condemnation of Israel; confession of Israel; coming of the Redeemer to Israel

This remarkable chapter continues God's charges against Israel, and He spells them out. Their sins had brought about their sad state. Religion had become a cover-up for their sins. God refuses to hear because of their iniquities, not because He was hard of hearing. Many people today think God has a hearing problem. God hears us all right. The problem lies with us.

Their sins are referred to thirty-two times. Many words are used to describe their sins: iniquities, sins, defiled with blood, lies, perverseness, vanity, mischief, adder's eggs, spider's web, viper, works, violence, evil, wasting, destruction, crooked paths, darkness, transgressions, departing, oppression, revolt, conceiving, and uttering of falsehood. There are twenty-three separate charges brought against them. What a picture this is! For Israel there will be a time of national confession of sin. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem. We are told about it in [Zechariah 12:11-14](#): "In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart."

Condemnation Of Israel (59:1-2)

Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save;
neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear [[Isa. 59:1](#)].

The reason that Israel was not saved in Isaiah's day was not due to any weakness in the "mighty bared arm of Jehovah" which we saw in [Isaiah 53](#). The Lord's hand was not shortened. Neither was it due to any faulty connection in His communication with man. Likewise in our day it is not the mental hurdles that man has to surmount nor any of his many problems, but his sin separates him from God.

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and
your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear [[Isa. 59:2](#)].

Let me quote the comment of Alexander Maclaren in The Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah: "It is not because God is great and I am small, it is not because He lives for ever, and my life is but a hand-breadth, it is not because of the difference between His omniscience and my ignorance, His strength and my weakness, that I am parted from Him: 'Your sins have separated between you and your God.' And no man, build he Babels ever so high, can reach thither. There is one means by which the separation is at an end, and by which all objective hindrances to union, and all subjective hindrances, are alike swept away. Christ has come, and in Him the heavens have bended down to touch, and touching to bless this low earth, and man and God are at one once more."

Now throughout this first section God spells out their sins. It is rather a discouraging picture of the human family -- and of you and me. Then we have a confession of Israel, which is coming in the future when the Redeemer comes to Zion.

Confession Of Israel (59:9-10)

Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake
us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness but we
walk in darkness [[Isa. 59:9](#)].

The change of pronouns here indicates that there is another speaker. Instead of "your" and "their," it is "we" and "our" and "us" now. This is Israel's confession. They confess they are in darkness. They confess that their religious rituals have all been a pretense.

Many folk need to do this in our day. I played golf with a dentist and a broker some time ago in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Both of these men told me how they came to know the Lord. Both of them had been members in rich liberal churches. They were both wealthy men. One of the men told me that one day he simply got tired of being a hypocrite, so he went to the Lord and confessed that he was a hypocrite and wanted reality. He accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. Oh, how this is needed today! It could actually bring revival to our churches.

Now notice Israel's confession:

We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no
eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate
places as dead men [[Isa. 59:10](#)].

You see, they are in darkness. What a picture of the man who does not have a personal relationship with God!

But when Israel will make this confession -- and they will make it in the future -- to these specific charges, they also will repudiate their sins. My friend, our confessions to God should be specific and then the sins repudiated. Each sin should be confessed privately to God.

I have no heart to go through this list of Israel's sins -- I have problems enough with my own.

Coming Of The Redeemer To Israel (59:20-21)

Notice that the pronoun changes again. The Redeemer will come to Zion.

And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord [[Isa. 59:20](#)].

Many people ask, "Will the whole nation be saved?" No, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" ([Rom. 9:6](#)). Those saved will only be a remnant. And there appears to be only a remnant in the church who are actually saved.

But the Redeemer is coming some day to Zion, and at that time there will be a great confession of sin. [Zechariah 12:10](#) tells us about it: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever [[Isa. 59:21](#)].

God has made a covenant that the Redeemer is coming to Zion. There will never be a time when this promise will be entirely forsaken, for this is God's purpose. It will be fulfilled in His good time.

Chapter 60

THEME: The Redeemer and Gentiles come to Jerusalem; the return of Israel to Jerusalem; Jerusalem's realization of all God's promises

The last part of Isaiah, I have a notion, is virgin territory to a great many folks because no school of prophecy dwells on this particular section of Scripture. In this chapter we see the Sun of Righteousness rising upon Israel; it is that which Malachi said would come to pass in the last days. When He comes, it will be like the sun rising into midnight darkness. In that day the nation Israel will reflect the glory light here upon the entire earth. The church, in the meantime, has gone to be with Christ. To attempt to make the nation Israel and the church synonymous is an interpretation that bogs down when you

get into an area like this. It is an unsatisfactory interpretation which does not meet the dimensions of these prophecies. I emphasize this because it has caused so much confusion. Certain schools of Bible interpretation place little importance on prophecy because they neglect sections like this great chapter in the Word of God.

This third and final division of the Book of Isaiah presents the Redeemer on the Cross (ch. 53). Following that there has been a definite progress and development which speaks not of the government of God (as the first part of Isaiah did), but rather of the grace of God. In the first section the emphasis was upon law; here it is upon grace. We find here -- as we found also in the first section -- that there is love in law. Also in this section we find that there is law in love.

The chapter before us brings us to the full manifestation of the Millennium. Chapter 59 closed by saying that the Redeemer will come to Zion. Now as we move along in chapter 60, He has come. In the Hebrew language there is what is known as the prophetic tense -- when the prophet goes beyond the event and looks back at it as if it were history. Isaiah speaks of many future things as having already taken place. For example, he begins by saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." And you can understand that for God to say a thing is going to happen, He is already on the other side of it -- for Him it is just the same as its having taken place. In other words, prophecy is the mold into which history is poured.

The Redeemer And Gentiles Come To Jerusalem (60:1-7)

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee [[Isa. 60:1](#)].

The Light has now come of which Malachi had spoken: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings . . ." ([Mal. 4:2](#)).

For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee [[Isa. 60:2](#)].

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Light of the world -- that was one of His claims when He was here. When He comes to the earth the second time, He is that Light.

"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth." The coming of the Light is necessitated by the night of spiritual darkness that has covered the earth -- and covers the earth today. In spite of the preaching of the gospel for nineteen hundred years, there is a wider circle of darkness today than ever before. Light must precede the future blessings. The Sun of Righteousness must rise to bring the millennial day. The preaching of the gospel was never intended by God to bring in the Millennium because it takes the Light to bring in the Millennium. And who is the Light? The Lord Jesus. We need the presence of the Redeemer in Zion, and He is going to bring the Gentiles from afar.

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising [[Isa. 60:3](#)].

I believe that the greatest revival -- that is, the greatest turning to God is yet in the future. In [Romans 11:15](#) Paul says, "For if the casting away of them [Israel] be the reconciling of

the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" It will be the resurrection of the nation Israel and the resurrection of the world. You and I live on a little clod of earth in space that is just a glorified cemetery!

Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side [[Isa. 60:4](#)].

Rebellious and scattered, they are going to come back to the Land of Promise -- but in obedience to God. The women, who are weaker than men, are carried, like women in the East often carry their children, on their hips.

Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee [[Isa. 60:5](#)].

Here you see the tremendous movement of all peoples toward Jerusalem -- by land, by sea, and by air -- which will be an occasion of astonishment.

The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah, all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD [[Isa. 60:6](#)].

Again wise men, not only from the East, but from all over the world, will come with gifts of gold and incense for the Redeemer. Notice that they are not going to bring myrrh. Why? Because myrrh spoke of Christ's death at His first coming. At His second coming they bring no myrrh. This is a remarkable verse!

All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory [[Isa. 60:7](#)].

Flocks are brought to Jerusalem for sacrifice. The sacrifices will be reinstituted in the millennial temple. This may be difficult for some to accept, but the Old Testament is very definite at this point. Read, for example, [Ezekiel 40](#) -- [Ezekiel 44](#). These sacrifices, I believe, will point back to the death of Christ as in the Old Testament they pointed forward to His death. They will have the same meaning.

The Return Of Israel To Jerusalem (60:8-12)

Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? [[Isa. 60:8](#)].

If there is any prophecy in Scripture that suggests the airplane, this is it, but I think the direct reference is to ships of the sea. It does not refer to what is happening today, although I understand that Jews who have come from farther East than Israel thought this prophecy was being fulfilled as they were brought by American airplanes to the land of Israel; but it does not quite meet the dimensions of the prophecy.

Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee [[Isa. 60:9](#)].

"Tarshish," as used here, evidently refers to all seagoing nations whose ships will be used to return Israel to the Land of Promise. The nations who once destroyed Israel will assist in her recovery. At that time Russia will send the Jews back to their land. Instead of demanding payment, they will send the Jews off with gifts as the Egyptians did. After all, Israel only collected their back pay from the Egyptians, and they had a great deal coming because they had been in slavery for four hundred years.

Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought [[Isa. 60:11](#)].

The nations of the world that are saved are going to come to Jerusalem in the Millennium.

For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted [[Isa. 60:12](#)].

The Lord Jesus made it clear that His judgment upon the nations would be based on their treatment of the Jews (See [Matt. 25:31-46](#)).

In the Millennium every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (see [Phil. 2:10-11](#)). In the Millennium all mankind will be forced to bow to Jesus. The force, of course, will be the force of public opinion in that day. In their hearts there will be those who won't want to bow, but they will go through the motions. Then when Satan is released at the end of the Millennium, those with rebellious hearts will naturally gravitate toward him, which will be the last rebellion. Then the eternal aspect of the Kingdom will be introduced. I believe at that time certain radical changes will take place. It won't be a patched-up earth, but a new earth and new heavens will come into existence. God is going to make all things new, and He is going to let me start over again. I am looking forward to that! I haven't done so well since I began my life in Texas many years ago. I would like to start over. God is going to make all things new. He is not going to retool the old nature; He is going to give me a new nature, and He is going to give a new nature to everyone who has trusted in Him. What a glorious, wonderful day that will be!

Jerusalem's Realization Of All God's Promises (60:15-22)

Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations [[Isa. 60:15](#)].

As Isaiah said in chapter 2, Jerusalem will become the center of the earth. A great deal of blessing will come in that day.

Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob [[Isa. 60:16](#)].

The riches of Jerusalem, which were taken away by the nations, will be restored with interest.

For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness [[Isa. 60:17](#)].

It is interesting that we see so many objects of brass in that land today. The markets of Egypt and Lebanon sell many brass objects, but in that future day they will be replaced by silver and gold objects for sale. In other words, precious metals will become commonplace again. Now notice some other wonderful things which will take place:

The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended [[Isa. 60:19-20](#)].

Jesus, the Light of the world, will be there. He is also the Light of the New Jerusalem. The universe no longer will need street lights on the corners. After all, the suns and stars are street lights out in space. God did not light up the universe very well because sin had come in, but in that day He is really going to light things up!

A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time [[Isa. 60:22](#)].

Human strength will be increased in that day without resorting to vitamins! The Lord Jesus called attention to the fact that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. In my own experience I find that my flesh just doesn't keep up with me! I would like to go much faster, but my body holds me back. However, in that future day all of this will be corrected -- corrected here on earth as it will be corrected for the heavenly people.

Chapter 61

THEME: Distinction between the first and second comings of Christ; delights of the Millennium

This chapter is of peculiar interest in view of the fact that the Lord Jesus opened His public ministry in Nazareth by quoting from it. This chapter continues the full blessings of the Millennium with Israel as the center of all earthly benefits. The last section projects us into the total benefits of the Millennium.

Distinction Between The First And Second Comings Of Christ (61:1-9)

Here in the first three verses we have one of the most remarkable passages of scripture, and it helps us to correctly interpret the Bible.

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent

me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our GOD; to comfort all that mourn [[Isa. 61:1-2](#)].

Now here we are given a system of biblical interpretation. If I were to read this without knowing the New Testament, I would not be sure about whom he is talking. Who is it who says, "The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me"? If He is the Lord Jesus, does it refer to His first or second coming? Well, in the New Testament we have God's interpretation. When the Lord Jesus went into the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth, He read this section: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" ([Luke 4:16-19](#)). Now, my friend, if you will look again at [Isaiah 61:1-2](#), you will see that He is not even through the sentence. Why didn't He keep reading? The rest of the sentence is "and the day of vengeance of our God" -- why didn't He preach that? Notice this: He closed the book. That was a deliberate action. "And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" ([Luke 4:20-21](#)). Isaiah's prophecy up to that point was fulfilled by Christ's first coming. Isaiah had not made the distinction between the first and second comings of Christ, but the Lord Jesus made the distinction. In Isaiah's prophecy a little "and" separates the first and second comings of Christ. You might say that this little and is more than nineteen hundred years long! The prophets wrote of the first and second comings of Christ; they saw these two great events, but they did not know the length of time that lay between them. The apostle Peter confirms this: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" ([1Pet. 1:10-11](#)). Peter says that the prophets spoke of the sufferings of Christ and the glory of Christ -- we see this in both the first and second sections of Isaiah.

Let me illustrate the problem the prophets had as they looked into the future. Behind my home in Pasadena, California -- several miles from the foothills -- looms Mount Wilson upon which Mount Wilson Observatory and the antennas of several radio stations are situated. Behind Mount Wilson I can see another mountain, Mount Waterman. It looks as if the two mountains are right there together, but I've been up in those mountains and I know there are at least twenty-five miles between them. It is impossible to see that distance between them unless you are there.

Now the prophet was way down in the valley looking into the future. He saw the first and second comings of Christ. Perhaps Isaiah was a little confused. In one breath how could he say that the Lord was going to bind up the brokenhearted, and open the prisons, and at

the same time announce the day of the vengeance of our God? How can both be true? If the prophet had stood where we stand today, he would have understood. We are in the valley between the first and second comings of Christ. We can look back to the first coming when He came to fulfill [Luke 4:20-21](#) and to die on the cross as our Redeemer, as we saw in [Isaiah 53](#). Somewhere beyond that mountain peak is the next one, the second coming of Christ. Before He comes again, however, the church will be removed from the earthly scene. In [John 14:3](#) Jesus said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

"To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God." When He comes to earth the second time to establish His Kingdom, it will be with vengeance. We will see that in chapter 63 where He is treading the winepress of the wrath of God. It is not a pretty scene -- God didn't say it would be pretty. But Christ is going to put down the rebellion that is here on this earth. You see, this little earth is still under His control. Emerson was wrong when he said that things are in the saddle and ride mankind. The Lord Jesus Christ is in the saddle, and He is in control. He is the King, and He is coming some day to put down all rebellion; that will be "the day of vengeance of our God."

"To comfort all that mourn." Immediately after announcing the day of vengeance, He says He is going to comfort all that mourn -- those who mourn over their sin, who long in their hearts for a better day, and who want to be obedient unto Him.

Not only will He comfort all who mourn but all that mourn in Zion --

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified [[Isa. 61:3](#)].

I believe that Isaiah knew his geography, and when he said "Zion," he meant Zion -- not Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Florida, or South America. Zion, the highest spot in Jerusalem, was well known to Isaiah.

Now, speaking specifically of the Jews, he says, "to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified." You can see that beyond the "day of vengeance," which will be amplified in chapter 63, is the peace and the prosperity of the Millennium.

Isaiah makes a play upon words with "beauty" and "ashes" -- it is like saying in English that God will exchange joy for judgment or a song for a sigh. After the sighing and the judgment there will be joy and singing.

And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations [[Isa. 61:4](#)].

The land of Israel has yet to receive this facelift, which will restore its Edenic beauty. What is happening in our day in Israel is wonderful. It has caused Dr. W. F. Albright, a

great Hebrew scholar, to take the position that he now believes in prophecy -- since a nation that has been out of their land for twenty-five hundred years is back in their land. It apparently has made a believer out of him. But let us be very careful not to call it the fulfillment of this prophecy. The "facelift" that this verse is talking about will take place at the beginning of the Millennium, and we are not at that place in time right now.

And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers [[Isa. 61:5](#)].

This is a real picture of prosperity.

But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves [[Isa. 61:6](#)].

"Men shall call you the Ministers of our God." Israel is going to be a priesthood of believers during the Millennium. It was God's original intention that the entire nation would be priests. In [Exodus 19:6](#) God said of Israel, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Because of their sin this was never attained, but it will be attained in the Millennium.

For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them [[Isa. 61:7](#)].

In other words, everlasting joy shall be Israel's portion. It will be fullness of joy! What a great day that will be.

For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them [[Isa. 61:8](#)].

Their lives then will adorn their religious ritual. We have looked at several passages which spoke of the fact that Israel went through all of the rituals, but God condemned her for it because her heart was not in it. Things will be changed in that future day.

And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed [[Isa. 61:9](#)].

Anti-Semitism will end, and pro-Semitism will begin because they are genuine witnesses for God. In our day neither Israel nor the church is fulfilling what God intended -- although I believe we are following God's program, and it is working out as He said it would. He warned us that the day would come when we would have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof.

Delights Of The Millennium (61:10-11)

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom

decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels [[Isa. 61:10](#)].

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God" -- my, they're going to have fun then! I wish that in our day more Christians had fun going to church. I wish they enjoyed it more. I wish the study of the Bible was a thrilling and exciting experience for all of us. It ought to be, and God intended that it should be.

"For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." The Messiah continues to speak here, and as He does, all who are His can join in the psalm of praise. They will greatly rejoice in the Lord. The problem in our day is that a great many Christians can't rejoice in the Lord because they are out of fellowship. They have sin in their lives, they are way out of the will of God, and they are going on in their self-will.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations [[Isa. 61:11](#)].

Not only will there be material benefits and physical improvements, but the true blessings will be spiritual in that day.

Chapter 62

THEME: The ambition of the Messiah for Israel; the anticipation of the Millennium; announcement for that future day

The yearning of the Messiah for these anticipated joys is before us in this chapter, and there ought to be a yearning in the hearts of believers for these joys. There is a danger today of believers looking for the coming of Christ to take us out of the world so we can get away from our problems; we use it as an escape mechanism. People get into real difficulty, and then they want the Lord to come and get them out of it. When I was attending seminary, one of my fellow students was a Canadian. He was a great fellow, but he did not have much of a sense of humor, and other students, myself included, enjoyed kidding him. On certain nights after dinner he would go outside, look up into the sky, and say, "Oh, if only the Lord would come!" He would say this on the nights just before he had Hebrew class the following day. Hebrew was a difficult class, and when he said he wished the Lord would come, what he was really saying was that he wished the Lord would come because he didn't want to study Hebrew. However, at graduation time, he received his degree on one day and the next day he was married to a beautiful girl who had come down from Canada. The night before graduation this fellow went outside, looked up into the sky, and said, "I hope the Lord doesn't come for a few more days." Yes, that is the way it is with many of us. When things are bad, we want the Lord to come right away because we are on a hot seat and we want to get off it.

The Ambition Of The Messiah For Israel (62:1-5)

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth [[Isa. 62:1](#)].

The reason Jerusalem can't have peace today is because her Messiah is not there. He is seated at God's right hand longing to rule that city in righteousness. You can call it the holy city if you want to, but it is anything but holy as it is now. However, it will be holy some day and the zeal of Jehovah of Hosts will perform it. Man won't make the Kingdom, and the United Nations won't do it -- that is obvious now. I don't think that anyone can bring peace into the world but this One. Only the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will accomplish it. The heart of the prophet Isaiah, as well as the heart of every godly soul on earth, enters into this longing. All of creation and all believers are groaning in their present state as they contemplate the future. Christian pilgrim, are you weary of the earthly journey, and do you desire the fellowship of the Father's house? That is a question each believer should consider.

And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name [[Isa. 62:2](#)].

A new heart, a new situation, a new earth, and a new righteousness demand a new name. I don't know what the new Vernon McGee will be like, but I'll be glad that the old Vernon McGee is gone. We will be new, and we are to be in the New Jerusalem. What a wonderful picture is given here of the future.

Redemption involves not only the church, but the nation Israel and this earth. Now we are all groaning and travailing, waiting for that grand day of deliverance.

Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God [[Isa. 62:3](#)].

Israel is also going to have a new position.

Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married [[Isa. 62:4](#)].

I have heard people sing that song about "Beulah land, sweet Beulah land," and I knew they did not have the foggiest notion what "Beulah land" meant or where it was. Let's see what this verse is talking about.

Israel has been "Forsaken" -- this is the picture and name of Israel since the crucifixion of Christ. When you look at that land today, the word that comes to your mind is forsaken -- desolate. That is the description of the land right now, but in the coming Kingdom Israel shall be called Hephzibah, which means "delightful." It is going to be a delightful spot. I have made the statement before that I don't like Jerusalem as it is today, but it will be delightful in that future day.

"And thy land Beulah" -- Beulah means "married." In other words, the King is present to protect it, and His presence means joy.

For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee [[Isa. 62:5](#)].

God will delight over Israel as a bridegroom delights over a bride.

The Anticipation Of The Millennium (62:6-7)

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence [[Isa. 62:6](#)].

This longing is contagious. The thirsty soul longs to drink. Every right-thinking person can pray for the peace of Jerusalem and long for that day when there will be peace.

And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth [[Isa. 62:7](#)].

God says that He ". . . will overturn, overturn, overturn . . . until he comes whose right it is . . ." to rule ([Ezek. 21:27](#)).

Announcement For That Future Day (62:11-12)

Now let's drop down to the announcement of the Lord for that future day --

Behold the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him [[Isa. 62:11](#)].

This announcement is pertinent for the present hour, as this verse indicates. The salvation of Israel is part of God's overall plan of salvation. We ought to present the gospel to every Israelite. The Messiah is their Savior today. And the second coming of Christ means the second coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom on earth for these people.

And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken [[Isa. 62:12](#)].

Israel cannot be called a holy people today. They are not redeemed today. Jerusalem is a forsaken city right now, but the day will come when things will be different. The experience of God's salvation will work a transformation in the nation Israel and also in the physical earth. The people will be called an holy people, and the land will be greatly desired. The contrary is true today. What a glorious future we have!

Chapter 63

THEME: The winepress of judgment; in wrath the Savior remembers mercy

The content of the first six verses of this chapter is certainly in contrast to the preceding section. It really seems out of keeping with the tenor of this entire section of Isaiah, but judgment precedes the Kingdom, and this has always been the divine order.

When [Isaiah 53:1](#) described Christ at His first coming "there was no beauty that we should desire Him," but here there is majesty and beauty, which identifies this passage

with His second coming. Also, the day of vengeance has been identified already with Christ's second coming rather than His first coming, as the Lord Himself clearly stated. Compare [Isaiah 61:2](#) with Luke 4:18-20.

I find no delight in the first part of this chapter, because we see the wrath of Christ likened to a winepress in His coming judgment. Then the second part of the chapter reveals the lovingkindness which Christ manifests toward His own.

The Winepress Of Judgment (63:1-6)

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save [[Isa. 63:1](#)].

The form used here is an antiphony. Those who ask the question concerning the One coming from Edom are overwhelmed by His majesty and beauty. He comes from Edom and the east, and we are told elsewhere that His feet will touch the Mount of Olives on the east. "Edom" and "Bozrah" are geographical places, and are to be considered as such, but this does not exhaust the mind of the Spirit. Edom is symbolic of the flesh and the entire Adamic race, and here we see the judgment of man.

Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat? [[Isa. 63:2](#)].

In that day men would get into the winepress barefooted to tread out the grapes. The red juice would spurt out of the ripe grapes and stain their garments. That is the picture you have in this verse, and that is why this question is asked. The spectators see that there is blood on His beautiful garments just as if He had trodden the winepress.

Now listen to His answer --

I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment [[Isa. 63:3](#)].

Notice that it is their blood, not His.

The early church fathers associated these first six verses with the first coming of Christ. They mistook the winepress as the suffering of Christ on the Cross. Such an interpretation is untenable, as the blood upon His garments is not His blood but that of others. It is the day of vengeance. It is identified already with the second coming of Christ rather than with His first coming. The Lord Jesus made that clear in [Luke 4:18-20](#) when He read [Isaiah 61:2](#). The Lord Jesus shed His own blood at His first coming, but that is not the picture which is presented here. He was trodden on at His first coming, but here He does the treading. This is a frightful picture of judgment.

Now we are told the reason for His judgment --

For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come [[Isa. 63:4](#)].

He has come to save forever His redeemed ones from their vicious oppressors. This is His judgment upon the earth, and it is defined as the day of vengeance.

And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me [[Isa. 63:5](#)].

The Lord Jesus Christ wrought salvation alone when He was on the Cross, and judgment is His solo work also.

And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth [[Isa. 63:6](#)].

This is the end of man's little day upon the earth. The King is coming to the earth in judgment. There are those who will say, "This is frightful. I don't like it." Then, like the proverbial ostrich, they will put their heads in the sand and read [John 14](#) or some other comforting passage of Scripture. However, we have to face up to this verse. The next time the Lord comes it will be in judgment. Can you think of any other way He can come and set up His Kingdom? Suppose the Lord Jesus came the second time the way he came the first time, as the Man of Galilee, the Carpenter of Nazareth who walked the countryside telling people that He had come from heaven. Suppose He knocked on the door of the Kremlin. Do you think those people are ready for Him? I don't think they are. I think they would put Him in front of a firing squad before the sun came up. No nation and no church today is prepared to turn their affairs over to Jesus. If they are prepared, why don't they do it? He was rejected when He came nearly two thousand years ago, and He has been rejected ever since. I can't think of any other way for Him to come the second time but in judgment.

Now others may say, "This verse is in the Old Testament. You have a God of wrath in the Old Testament, but when you get to the New Testament, He is a God of love." One of the reasons that the Book of Revelation has never been popular with the liberal is because it is filled with judgment. The Book of Revelation is in the New Testament, and the language is the strongest in the Bible (except what came from the lips of the Lord Jesus, who spoke more of hell than anyone else). The Book of Revelation speaks of Christ's coming to put down the unrighteousness and rebellion and godlessness that is on the earth. Consider this one segment of the Book of Revelation: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shall be, because thou hast judged thus" ([Rev. 16:1-5](#)). You see, immediately the critic will say, "God is not fair; He is not righteous to do this." God lets us know that when He judges like this, He is indeed being righteous. "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and

righteous are thy judgments" ([Rev. 16:6-7](#)). God is right in what He does -- whether we think so or not. After all, to compare you and me with this tremendous universe would make it obvious that we don't amount to very much. Your opinion and my opinion, even when they are put together, aren't worth very much. It is what God says that is important. When God says He is righteous, but we don't think He is, that means that we are wrong. God is righteous in what He does. "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory" ([Rev. 16:8-9](#)). You would think that all of this would cause them to turn to God, but they didn't react that way. Instead it just brought out what they really were -- just as the plagues of Egypt did in Pharaoh's day. "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain" ([Rev. 16:10](#)). I have quoted this extensive passage from the New Testament to show the agreement between the Old and New Testaments. Don't let anyone tell you that we have a God of wrath in the Old Testament and a God of love in the New Testament! The God of love is the One making these statements in both the Old and New Testaments because there is love in law -- in fact, there is law in love.

Judgment is frightful, but He is coming in judgment when He returns to this earth, and He has not asked me to apologize for Him.

In Wrath The Savior Remembers Mercy (63:7-19)

In this section we see that in wrath the Lord Jesus remembers mercy to those who are His.

I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses [[Isa. 63:7](#)].

The entire content and intent changes abruptly at this point. It is like coming out of darkness into the sunlight of noonday. It is like turning from black to white. Our God is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders, and this is only one aspect of His many attributes. He is good, and He exhibits lovingkindness. He is also a God of mercy. If these attributes were not in evidence, we would all be consumed today -- you may be sure of that! He has to come in judgment to take over this earth. It seems to me that He has given men an extra long time to turn to Him.

For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour [[Isa. 63:8](#)].

His "people" here are believing Israelites and also a great company of Gentiles who will turn to Christ during the Great Tribulation. (Of course here the church has already gone to be with Him and has been in His presence for some time.)

"Children that will not lie." It sounds as if He had high hopes of them, but they disappointed Him. Certainly He expects you and me to live lives well-pleasing to Him, and He specifically admonished us, "Lie not one to another."

In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old [[Isa. 63:9](#)].

How tender are these words. I believe that the angel of the Lord is none other than the pre-incarnate Christ. We are told that in His love and pity He redeemed and carried them. He entered into the sufferings of His people.

Now there has been some question about whether "in all their affliction he was afflicted" should be positive or negative. We have good manuscript evidence for the negative: "in all their affliction he was not afflicted." Which is true? Well, both are true, but I personally like the negative much better. Let me give you my reason. When the Lord went through the wilderness with the children of Israel, He wasn't afflicted when they were afflicted. For example, when they were bitten by the fiery serpents, He wasn't bitten. In all their affliction He was not afflicted. He was like a mother or a father who just stood by and waited for them. He didn't go on without them. The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire were there. God was waiting for them. For forty years through that wilderness experience He was patient with them, patient like a mother.

When I was a pastor in Pasadena, my study was right by the street that led to a market. I used to watch a mother who had two children. One child she carried, and the other little fellow often walked along by himself. Sometimes the little fellow would stop, and his mother always waited for him. Sometimes when he would fall down, or stray a little, doing something he shouldn't do, she would wait patiently for him. I often thought to myself, That is the way God has been doing with me all of these years. I fall down, or I get in trouble, and God waits for me. That is the way He does with His people.

But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them [[Isa. 63:10](#)].

I think the Holy Spirit gets rather tired of you and me! But He is patient with us. Thank God for that!

Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy spirit within him? [[Isa. 63:11](#)].

I think this is a direct reference to Israel, but at the same time it is a picture of the entire human family. Some expositors do not feel that the reference here is to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead, because the Old Testament does not contain a clear-cut distinction of the Holy Spirit. However, I believe that the Holy Spirit mentioned here is the Holy Spirit that today dwells in believers. Although in the Old Testament we do not have a clear-cut distinction of the work of the Holy Spirit, I believe this is definitely a mention of it.

The Holy Spirit is the One --

That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm,
dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting
name?

That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness,
that they should not stumble? [[Isa. 63:12-13](#)].

Once again God refers to the history of their deliverance out of Egypt. Then He continues the history of how He has led them.

Here the prophet and the people plead with God to look upon their great need and desire.

Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy
holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the
sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they
restrained?

Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us,
and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our
redeemer; thy name is from everlasting [[Isa. 63:15-16](#)].

God was the Father of the nation Israel, but there is no thought in the Old Testament that He was the Father of the individual Israelite. It is a corporate term rather than a personal one in the Old Testament. In the New Testament it becomes personal, not corporate. As Abraham was the father of the nation and not of each individual Israelite, so God, too, was the Father of the nation.

O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and
hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake,
the tribes of thine inheritance [[Isa. 63:17](#)].

This is a pleading prayer, asking God to intervene for them.

We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not
called by thy name [[Isa. 63:19](#)].

Now they surrender completely to God. This should be the attitude of the Christian today -- complete yielding to God. Most of us are afraid to yield to God because we are afraid He will be hard on us. God wants to be gentle with us if we will give Him a chance. But remember that He also is the God of judgment. He is the One who is coming to earth some day to tread the winepress of the fierceness of His wrath.

God is not trying to frighten you; He is just telling you the truth.

Chapter 64

THEME: God's control of the universe recognized; man's condition in the universe confessed

This chapter continues the pleading of the hungry hearts for the presence of God in life's affairs. No child of God today can be immune to such ardent petitions. The Christian can cry with the same passionate desire, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (see [Rev. 22:20](#)).

This, too, is a neglected section of the Word of God. We have attempted to emphasize this section so that you can see why we hold the premillennial viewpoint and why we believe Christ is coming before the Great Tribulation period. The church will be taken out of the world before the Tribulation. The Lord will come at the end of the Tribulation to establish His Kingdom. This is not just a theory. This is what we find in the Book of Isaiah. We have looked at Isaiah almost verse by verse, and the prophet has presented a very definite program. The Word of God simply does not give isolated verses to prove some particular theory of interpretation, but whatever your or my theory is, it has to fit in place. Some of the theories I hear today remind me of the lady who went into the shoestore to get a pair of shoes. The salesman asked, "What size do you wear?" The lady replied that she could wear a size four, but a size five felt so much better that she always bought a size six or sometimes a seven. There are some theories, as far as the Word of God is concerned, that require a size change because they simply don't fit.

God's Control Of The Universe Recognized (64:1-5)

Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence [[Isa. 64:1](#)].

The prophet is a representative of the believing remnant of Israel in that future day. Again he is using the past tense, which is called a prophetic tense. That is, God sees it as having already taken place, and He gives the prophecy to Isaiah from the other side, looking back at the event.

The prophet is pleading with God just as the remnant of Israel will do in that day of the Great Tribulation. This Scripture is not written to us -- the church is not in view here. It is addressed to the remnant of Israel, but as believers we can identify with them. Our prayer today should be for the return of the Lord. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." But it is clear in this section that Isaiah is predicting Israel's prayer during the Great Tribulation period.

As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! [[Isa. 64:2](#)].

Just as fire makes water boil, so the presence of God would make the nations tremble. Today the nations are not conscious of the existence of God. There are people who wonder how we can sit down with godless nations like Russia or China. The reason is that we are just about as godless as they are. In our day the nations of the world are not turning to God, nor do they recognize Him. However, as the end of the age approaches, I believe there will be a very real consciousness that God is getting ready to break through. There was that consciousness throughout the world at the time of the birth of Christ, and several Roman historians have called attention to that fact.

When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence [[Isa. 64:3](#)].

The very mountains melt -- that is, become molten -- at His presence. The enemies then will cry for the mountains to hide them from ". . . the wrath of the Lamb" ([Rev. 6:16](#)).

For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him [[Isa. 64:4](#)].

Paul expresses this same thought in [1Corinthians 2:9](#) when he says, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Paul goes on to say, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" ([1Cor. 2:10](#)). [1Corinthians 2:9](#) is obviously a quote from Isaiah, but [verse 10](#) tells us that in our day the Holy Spirit will reveal these things unto us. In the day of the Great Tribulation they will have to wait until Christ comes. And even for us it can be said, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" ([1Cor. 13:12](#)).

All through this section we can identify with these people, for we have a hope also. We are looking for Him to take us out of the world, and they will be looking for Him to come and establish a kingdom here on the earth.

My friend, it seems to me that the only folk who miss this distinction are the theologians. Failure to recognize that Christ is going to take the church up to meet Him in the air and that He is coming down to the earth to establish His Kingdom gives us some upside-down theology.

Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved [[Isa. 64:5](#)].

Here begins the acknowledgment of sins and, at the same time, an expression of confidence in the redemption of the Savior.

Man's Condition In The Universe Confessed (64:6-12)

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away [[Isa. 64:6](#)].

This verse is familiar because it is used very frequently to establish the fact that man has no righteousness per se; that is, man has no righteousness in himself whatsoever. This is not only true of Israel but it is also true of the entire human family. Both Jew and Gentile alike have sinned and come short of the glory of God. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." It does not matter what we might consider to be good works. It may sound pretty good to give a million dollars to feed the poor and hungry or to care for little orphans and widows, but in God's sight anything that the flesh produces is as filthy rags. You cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing. A lost sinner is unable to do anything that is acceptable to God -- he must first come to God His way. This is very difficult for man to accept -- especially the unsaved man who is depending upon his good works to save him.

But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand [[Isa. 64:8](#)].

God is our Father by creation, but man lost that image. You and I can become sons of God in only one way, and that is through Christ. The New Testament revelation of the sons of God is not by creation at all, but on an entirely different basis. In [John 1:12-13](#) we read, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

"We all are the work of thy hand" is a recognition that God is our Creator. He is the Potter, the One who creates. Now, a man that makes a vessel or a pretty vase is, in a sense, the father of it. In this same way we speak of George Washington as being the father of our country.

Paul makes this distinction in his speech in Athens: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" ([Acts 17:28-29](#)). Man is the offspring of God in that he was created by Him, but not all men are the born-again sons of God. Paul is saying that since God has created us, we ought not to make an image and say that it is a likeness of God. In doing so we would be attempting to create God, and God has forbidden that.

Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation [[Isa. 64:10](#)].

The description given in this verse was not true in Isaiah's day, but it came to pass shortly afterwards when Babylon came against Jerusalem. 1Kings 25:9-10 tell us, "And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about." Isaiah's prophecy was literally fulfilled.

Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste [[Isa. 64:11](#)].

Isaiah writes as if this has already taken place, but it didn't happen until about one hundred years after Isaiah. The temple was destroyed at the same time Jerusalem was destroyed.

Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore? [[Isa. 64:12](#)].

The prophet closes this chapter with a question: Will God refuse to act? The remainder of Isaiah's prophecy is God's answer to this question. God rejected Israel only after they rejected Him, but it did not thwart His plan and purpose for them and for the earth. God has carried through with His program, which is yet to be finalized.

Chapter 65

THEME: Redeemer's reason for rejecting the nation; reservation of a remnant; revelation of the new heavens and the new earth

In chapter 64 we noted the fervent prayer of the prophet and the people pleading with the King to break through all barriers and come to earth. Chapters 65 and 66 contain God's answer to that plea. God makes it very clear that their sins and unfaithfulness are responsible for His judgment upon them, but that their sins have not frustrated His promises and purposes concerning the coming Kingdom. God has preserved a remnant through which He will fulfill all of His prophecies. Again He gives a vision of the Kingdom and a prospectus of the eternal position of Israel in the new heavens and new earth. This will take us to the end of the Book of Isaiah which goes down in a blaze of glory.

Redeemer's Reason For Rejecting The Nation (65:1-7)

I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them
that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation
that was not called by my name [[Isa. 65:1](#)].

He is speaking here of the Gentiles to whom the gospel has now come. When Paul came to Philippi he had had the vision of the man in Macedonia. However, when he got over there, he found, not a man looking for him wanting to hear the gospel, but a woman by the name of Lydia who was holding a prayer meeting down by the river. Although she may not have recognized her need, Paul brought the gospel to her.

Paul quotes this verse in [Romans 10:20](#): "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." That is the way it happened to us, my friend. Our ancestors were heathen barbarians. They were not down on the shore with their hands held out, saying, "Oh please, send us missionaries!" They didn't want them; they even killed some of those who did come. Today the heathen are not begging for the gospel -- nobody's begging for the gospel. God has responded to people who didn't even call upon Him. I never asked to be saved -- He just saved me. I was like the black boy down south who said, "I ran from Him as fast as my sinful legs would carry me and as far as my rebellious heart would take me, and He took out after me and ran me down." That is the way it happened for all of us who have been saved.

I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people,
which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts
[[Isa. 65:2](#)].

Now He is talking to the Jew, to the nation Israel. God first gave the gospel to him; it was given "to the Jew first." Again, in [Romans 10:21](#), Paul says, "But to Israel he saith, All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." God rejected them only after they rejected Him. In [Acts 13:46](#) we read: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." That is the way it all came about. In other words, if Jerusalem refuses the gospel, Ephesus will receive it. If Los Angeles rejects the

gospel, then maybe Bombay, India, or some out-of-the-way place is going to hear. The flood tide of God's grace will spill over somewhere in this world. Thank God for that.

A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick [[Isa. 65:3](#)].

This is the reason that blessings were withheld from Israel: they were continually going into idolatry and rebelling against God.

Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day [[Isa. 65:4-5](#)].

This is just a partial list of the reasons for Israel's rejection. They were breaking the commandments God gave to them.

Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom.

Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom [[Isa. 65:6-7](#)].

Israel walked in pride. They practiced the eternalities of a God-given religion, but their hearts were far from God. They practiced iniquity as easily as they practiced the rituals of religion. In so doing, they blasphemed God.

Reservation Of A Remnant (65:8-14)

A remnant is reserved through which all of God's promises are to be fulfilled. God always has had a remnant.

Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all [[Isa. 65:8](#)].

In spite of their sins, God would not totally exterminate them because of the believing remnant. The remnant is compared to a cluster of wonderful grapes that has been passed over in the vineyard.

And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there [[Isa. 65:9](#)].

"A seed out of Jacob" could refer to the Lord Jesus Christ, and in one sense I think it does, but more particularly it refers to the remnant out of Israel that is to be saved. For the sake of the remnant God will make good His promises.

And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me [[Isa. 65:10](#)].

You see, there was to be a place, a place of safety for the little flock, for the remnant.

But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.

Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not [[Isa. 65:11-12](#)].

But for the remainder of the nation that went headlong without heeding the Word of God, there remains nothing but punishment. I do not understand how intelligent people who believe in the existence of God can fail to realize that there must finally come a judgment and a straightening out of things. If they continue on in sin, they will be judged, as surely as God judged the bulk of the nation Israel.

Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit [[Isa. 65:14](#)].

Just as God made a distinction between the nation as a whole and the remnant, he makes the same distinction in the contemporary church. The church is a vast organization with a tremendously bloated membership. The question is asked as to whether the church will go through the Great Tribulation period. Well, there is a church that will go through the Great Tribulation. It is called an old harlot in [Revelation 17](#). It is just an organization and does not belong to Christ. It is not His bride at all. The true believers in the body of Christ will be taken out before the Great Tribulation period. We need to recognize that there is a distinction to be made between that which is merely outward and that which is genuine.

Revelation Of The New Heavens And The New Earth (65:17-25)

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind [[Isa. 65:17](#)].

Here the creation of the new heavens and the new earth seems to precede chronologically the setting up of the Kingdom. But I think when we examine it closely we find that the remnant has already judged the Kingdom. The others have been judged and do not enter the Kingdom. The Lord Jesus made this clear in [Matthew 25:34](#) when He said, ". . . Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The others were to be cast into outer darkness and would not enter the Kingdom.

Now at the end of the millennial Kingdom -- that is, at the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ, after that final rebellion -- the creation of the new heavens and new earth takes place. You see, after the Rapture and during the Millennium tremendous changes in the earth will be made. The desert is going to blossom as the rose. But when you get to the new heavens and the new earth, there will not be any sea and there actually will not be

any desert. It will be a new earth. We will have traded in the old model and gotten a new one.

I deal with this subject further in a little book I have called Three Worlds in One. The message comes from [2Peter 3](#) where we find that there are three worlds. There is the world that was -- that which was destroyed by the waters of the Noahic flood. Then there is the present world, which is going to be destroyed by fire. And finally there will come into existence the new heavens and the new earth.

But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy [[Isa. 65:18](#)].

Here Isaiah is definitely speaking of the millennial blessings as well as the eternal blessings. The millennial Kingdom is a phase of the eternal Kingdom, but it is also a time of judgment. I do not think you can bring in a new heaven and a new earth until God's program of judgment is completed. When judgment is over, then we are ready for all things to be made new. I believe that after the Millennium there is something even more wonderful in store for the child of God. Man's potential will be greatly increased. Jerusalem will be a city of joy. It is not that today. It has a Wailing Wall and very few smiling people. But the day will come when God will make it a city of joy.

And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying [[Isa. 65:19](#)].

What a change there is going to be for Jerusalem!

There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed [[Isa. 65:20](#)].

The longevity of life that predated the patriarchs will be one of the features of the Kingdom. People will live a long time. There won't be any need for senior citizen homes because there won't be any senior citizens. All of us will be young!

And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them [[Isa. 65:21](#)].

Prosperity is another feature of the Kingdom. It will be a time of real blessing.

They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands [[Isa. 65:22](#)].

There will be permanence and stability.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD [[Isa. 65:25](#)].

This is not what happens today, my friend. If the wolf and the lamb lie down together, it is the wolf feeding on the lamb. A wolf likes lamb chops. But in that day they will be together, and the lion will eat straw. I like to tell the story of the young upstart who publicly questioned Dr. George Gill in a meeting, saying, "Who ever heard of a lion eating straw? Anyone knows that a lion never eats straw!" Dr. Gill, in his characteristically easygoing manner, said, "Young man, if you can make a lion, then I will make him eat straw. The One who created the lion will equip him to eat straw when He wants him to do it." In other words, in that day the sharp fang and the bloody claw will no longer rule animal life. The law of the jungle will be changed to conform to the rule of the King. There will be nothing to hurt or harm or make afraid in the whole world. It will be a new world then, will it not?

Chapter 66

THEME: The Creator, Ruler, Redeemer, Judge, Regenerator, and Rewarder; the Lord decides the destiny of both the saved and the lost

Today our prayer is, "Thy kingdom come . . ." ([Matt. 6:10](#)). In [Isaiah 66](#) the Kingdom has come.

The Creator, Ruler, Redeemer, Judge, Regenerator, And Rewarder (66:1-10)

Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? [[Isa. 66:1](#)].

"The earth is my footstool" -- this little earth on which you and I live is not very important. It is only a footstool for God!

"Where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" Any temple down here on this earth could not contain Him. Solomon recognized that. In his prayer of dedication for the first temple, he said, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" ([1Kings 8:27](#)). Therefore, the eternal character of the Kingdom seems to me to be the very presence of God. You won't need a temple there. I think that the New Jerusalem ([Rev. 21](#)) will be a place to which the people on earth will come to worship and visit.

Listen to the God of creation, the God who is high and holy and lifted up:

For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word [[Isa. 66:2](#)].

The God who created this vast universe, who is above it and beyond it, condescends to dwell with the humble and contrite of heart. Oh, what condescension on the part of God! In that day the meek shall inherit the earth; in fact, they will inherit all things.

He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations [[Isa. 66:3](#)].

Apparently the sacrificial system will be dispensed with after the Millennium. To offer an ox without spiritual comprehension is the same as murder. Everything in eternity must point to Christ -- or that which was once commanded becomes sin.

Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed [[Isa. 66:5](#)].

God will make the distinction between the true and the false -- that which is real and that which is not. Christ said to let the wheat and tares grow together, that He would separate them. Now that time has come. The Pharisee who was meticulous in his religious practice is to be cast out. The publican who stood afar off and repented will be received.

A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies [[Isa. 66:6](#)].

God will finally deal with the enemies of Israel -- they are His enemies also.

Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child [[Isa. 66:7](#)].

The Great Tribulation will be a time of travail. Israel will go through the Great Tribulation after Christ is born in Bethlehem -- "before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child" who is Christ Jesus. This is a remarkable verse.

Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God [[Isa. 66:9](#)].

God will make sure that all He has promised is accomplished. The 144,000 Jews who are sealed at the beginning of the Great Tribulation will come through it -- not just 143,999, but everyone of them will be there. How wonderful!

Now he can say:

Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her [[Isa. 66:10](#)].

What a time of blessing it will be.

The Lord Decides The Destiny Of Both The Saved And The Lost (66:18-24)

For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory [[Isa. 66:18](#)].

All nations must appear before Him. The Lord Jesus mentioned this in [Matthew 25:31-32](#). "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." At that time a great company of Gentiles are going to be saved as well as many from Israel. The nations are going to come and worship in Jerusalem.

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain [[Isa. 66:22](#)].

God's purposes and promises for Israel are as eternal as the new heavens and the new earth.

And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD [[Isa. 66:23](#)].

The redeemed of all ages will worship God throughout eternity. That will be the most engaging and important business of eternity.

And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh [[Isa. 66:24](#)].

In other words, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" ([Isa. 57:21](#)). That is going to be their condition throughout eternity -- no peace, no rest, no contentment, no God. The Book of Isaiah closes with this third warning that there is no peace for the wicked. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" ([Matt. 11:15](#)).

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